A COMPARISON BETWEEN SELECTED PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL FACTORS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ALTERNATIVE AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

AN ABSTRACT

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,
ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

EMMA L. YORK

ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

JULY, 1986

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was two-fold: (1) to analyze the personal characteristics of high school students enrolled in an alternative school with those enrolled in a traditional school and (2) to compare the achievement observed in selected psychological and educational factors by these students during a semester.

Significance of the Study

A review of the literature pertaining to high risk students revealed that the majority of the studies focused on the acquisition of basic skills to the relative exclusion of other important areas. For example, there was a paucity of research related to the affective domain. No attempt is made to diminish the importance of reading writing and arithmetic in the student's academic behavior but equal attention needs to be given to the psychosocial factors that impact on the academic behavior of students.

Methods and Procedures

The ex post facto research design was employed in this study. It permitted the investigator to compare the differences between alternative school students and traditional school students on selected psychological and educational variables. The dependent variables were the measure of academic achievement, academic performance, attendance, career maturity, and disruptive behavior.

Participants

The participants consisted of seventy adolescent students.

Instruments

The following instruments were utilized to collect data for this study: the Basic Skills Assessment Program, the Career Maturity Inventory, the How I See Myself Scale, the attendance reports, and the discipline records of the participant.

Conclusions

The following general conclusions were drawn from the findings of this study:

1. Since there was no statistically significant difference between the levels of self-concept and academic achievement of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools it may be concluded that these students have similar self-concepts and academic achievement.

2. The nature of student academic achievement in alternative schools parallel academic achievement of students enrolled in traditional schools.

3. There is a strong similarity between the academic performance of students enrolled in traditional schools.

4. Students in alternative schools and students in traditional schools have similar attendance patterns.

5. Students in alternative schools experience the same level of career maturity as students in traditional schools.

6. Students in alternative schools experience the same level of disruptive behavior as students enrolled in traditional schools.

A COMPARISON BETWEEN SELECTED PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL FACTORS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ALTERNATIVE AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

APPROVAL OF DISSERTATION

Full name of student: Emma L. York

Advisor: Dr. Rudolph Green

To the Committee on Graduate Study:

The attached dissertation: A COMPARISON BETWEEN SELECTED PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL FACTORS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ALTERNATIVE AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

has been approved by the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree and is recommended acceptance.

(Signature) Rudolph V. Green

Robert L. Sinclair

Dean: Robert E. McGill Williams

Date: July 7, 1986

FORM C-9C

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Table 10. Summary of Findings

Type of Behavior	Statistics Traditional School Vs. Alternative									
	df	M	sdM	M	sd	sdM	tf	sdM	t	
Academic Achievement	35	4.589	1.303	.171	2.563	1.609	.261	.026	.369	.070
Self-Concept	35	14.750	3.183	.583	14.971	15.582	1.635	-.221	1.721	.128
Academic Performance	35	1.605	.993	.160	1.520	1.726	.276	.085	.319	.226
*Attendance Patterns	35	15.147	11.095	1.902	16.900	17.533	3.831	1.753	3.558	-.493
Knowledge About Self	35	10.750	3.904	.660	9.395	2.295	.786	1.355	1.026	1.321
Knowledge About Jobs	35	10.250	5.280	.892	11.289	11.990	1.471	-1.039	1.720	-1.604
Choosing a Job	35	8.194	-4.332	.732	8.789	9.674	1.590	-.595	1.750	1.340
Disruptive Behavior	35	.861	1.344	.224	.850	1.775	.282	.011	.360	.033

The data in Table 10 show no statistically significant differences between any of the variables. The null hypotheses were accepted in all cases.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Although I happily accept the responsibility for the preparation of this document, I am extremely aware that a work of this magnitude is not the product of a unitary effort. I am deeply indebted to many persons who shared their resources, talent and time with me throughout my doctoral program.

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To my mother, Mrs. Daisy York, who only asked for "my best" in any worthwhile endeavor that I choose to undertake, I extend my heartfelt thanks.

DEDICATED

TO

My Mother, Mrs. Daisy York

and Seven Sisters

Ella

Rose

Daisy

Darlene

Bessie

April

Stephanie

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One does not have to conduct an intensive study of the literature related to education to discover that far too many students fail in school today. Students fail in schools in large metropolitan areas, suburban schools and small rural schools. Although low-achievement hits hardest at families at the lower end of the socio-economic continuum, both Black and White, failure is consistently more prevalent in impoverished inner-city schools. Many experts maintain that in these schools, education is defeated. Whatever takes place in these schools cannot go under the rubric of education.[1]

Education faces its most critical challenge in poverty pockets of large metropolitan areas. Conditions in these areas are conducive to failure. At home, young people are faced with unstable conditions; while at school, they are discouraged, if not defeated by teachers who are either too sympathetic, apathetic, afraid or reluctant to make serious commitments to teaching students whose culture is alien to their own. Such teachers tend to hold very low expectations for students' academic

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[1]William Glasser, Schools Without Failure (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. xiii.

progress. Many educators tend to feel guilty of being too obsessed with broad, social, environmental and cultural factors pertaining to the students' lives that they have allowed these variables to become barriers or deterrents to their effectiveness in the classroom. Therefore, they have not looked deeply into the role that education has played in this educational crisis.

According to research, in many large cities, 75 percent of elementary children do not get firm foundations in the basic skills. In other words, three out of four children who move from elementary schools to middle and high schools have not achieved the necessary skills in reading, writing and arithmetic. Since there are weak foundations, such students probably will not develop these skills as they are socially promoted to the next grade levels. Instead, their achievement in these areas will get weaker as the work increases in difficulty and the system becomes more impersonal. these students become angry and frustrated because their unsuccessful attempts in school. Feeling that their only stepping stone to success, education, is no longer attainable, these students become prime candidates for jails, mental institutions and welfare systems.

Students who fail in school are in a desperate position. They feel little self-worth; yet, they must maintain an identity.[1] Often they will join others who are similarly

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[1]James Coleman, The Adolescent Society (New York: The Free Press, 1961), p. 11.

situated in order to find an identity. These alliances often are fatalistic, in as much as these young people often break the law, and are introduced to the juvenile justice system very early in life. Unfortunately, these potential dropouts, in too many instances, become a concern of the school system and society only after they become threats to these institutions.

Alternative schools have the potential to help students who otherwise might not progress successfully through school. Alternative schools are designed to provide basic educational and survival skills for high risk students. With this concept in mind, the intent of this study is to investigate the following question: Are alternative schools as effective as traditional schools in meeting the psychological and educational needs of young people enrolled in such schools in large urban areas?

Purpose

The purpose of this study was two-fold: (1) to analyze the personal characteristics of high schools students enrolled in a traditional school, and (2) to compare the achievement observed in selected psychological and educational factors by these students during a semester.

Hypotheses

In carrying out the purposes of this study, the following null hypotheses were tested. The .05 level of significance was used for accepting or rejecting each hypothesis.

$1H_o$: There will be no statistically significant difference between the mean levels of self-concept and academic achievement of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

$2H_o$: There will be no statistically significant difference between the mean levels of academic performance of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

$3H_o$: There will be no statistically significant difference between the mean levels of attendance patterns of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

$4H_o$: There will be no statistically significant difference between the mean levels of career maturity of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools

$5H_o$: There will be no statistically significant difference between the mean levels of disruptive behavior of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

Significance of the Study

The review of the literature pertaining to high-risk students revealed that the majority of the studies focused on the acquisition of basic skills to the relative exclusion of other important areas. For example, there was a paucity of research related to the affective domain. No attempt is made to diminish the importance of reading, writing and arithmetic in the students' academic behavior, but equal attention needs to be given to the psycho-social factors that impact on the academic behavior of students.

This study is expected to enhance the body of research in the

affective and cognitive domains. Specifically, this study is expected to be of importance for the following reasons:

1. It will identify some of the educational and psychological reasons for premature withdrawal from school.

2. It will identify some of the educational, personal and psychological characteristics of students enrolled in alternative schools.

3. It will provide additional information to researchers and educators regarding the influence of alternative programs on the dropout problem.

4. It will be significant to the Milwaukee Public School System and other large urban school systems that have experienced high percentages of school withdrawals for the reasons previously enumerated.

5. It will be significant to school systems that attempt to reduce school withdrawals.

Assumptions

In carrying out this study, the following assumptions were made.

1. Scores in mathematics, reading and writing served as indicators of academic achievement. It was assumed that students enrolled in alternative schools performed as well in mathematics, reading and writing as did students in traditional schools.

2. First semester grade-point average was used as an indicator of academic performance. It was assumed that students enrolled in alternative schools would perform as well as students enrolled in traditional schools.

Limitations

When making generalizations from the findings of this study, it is recommended that the following factors be observed:

1. The research pertinent to this study was conducted in two schools in a large metropolitan area. It is recommended that findings and interpretations be restricted to similar samples in similar settings.

2. Although only two schools were used in this study, the sample selected appropriately represented the total population of students in alternative and traditional schools.

3. Since part of the data was collected from a self-report inventory, the information was influenced by the honesty, integrity and memory of the respondents.

Evolution and Statement of the Problem

Throughout the history of American education, schools and society have been perceived as mirrors which reflect each other's image. Whatever ills afflict society will be reflected in the schools and vice versa. Rapid technological, social and economic changes produce instability and uncertainty in society; thus, it is not surprising that the current scene in education is one of restlessness and confusion.[1] Many students get lost in the midst of this confusion and fail to see how what is being taught in school prepares them to function in the world in which they

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[1]J. L. Morse, "The Dropout, the School and the Community," English Journal 61 (1972): 1232-1238.

live. Students who fail to see the relevance of the curriculum will, inevitably, lose interest in school. This loss of interest will result in intermittent attendance and various forms of inappropriate behavior.

Despite the compulsory school attendance law which was passed in 1852, intermittent school attendance continues to be a major problem facing the nation's public school systems today. Intermittent school attendance not only has a devastating effect on the personal lives of students, but in school systems as well. Average daily attendance (ADA) partially determines the amount of financial support school systems receive from taxes.[1]

Attempts to solve this problem often result in frustrating difficulty. Educational systems are powerless because they cannot insure that each child will take advantage of the educational opportunities that they have to offer. Individualization, enrichment, and the revision of the curriculum, at best, only encourage sporadic attendance on the part of students. Far too many students have not acquired the basic skills needed for useful and productive citizenship. This condition results in a tremendous loss to the individual and society. Studies continuously show the direct relationship between attendance and progress through school. Students who attend school on an intermittent

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[1]S. Kennel and M. Sayles, "Dropout Forum", Educational Leadership 31 (1974): 694-698.

basis are often retarded in the basic or foundation courses by as much as two years.[1] Deficiencies in reading and mathematics pose definite problems to high-risk students who sit passively as they are moved through the educational system via social promotions. Social promotions do not provide them with basic skills; they only place students in grade levels that correspond more closely with their chronological age. These students become frustrated, and drop out of school "psychologically" at first; and, eventually, "physically."

The stark reality that 40 percent of all children in the U.S. are subject to premature withdrawal is especially frightening when one considers that America, above all other countries, makes education readily available to all of its citizens. In America, high school graduation is considered a minimum educational requirement; yet, growing numbers of young people fail to fulfill that requirement.

Since society has given public education the charge of acculturating and socializing the nation's citizenry, it is incumbent upon educators to devise effective means of solving problems related to education. Educators must provide educational alternatives for students who fail in traditional school settings.

As our society presently functions, public schools are the

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[1]Lucius F. Cervantes, The Dropout: Causes and Cures, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965), p. 32.

only institutions where a majority of its citizens attend at some point in their lives. Two major responsibilities of the school are: (1) to teach the skills necessary for acquiring responsible citizenship, and (2) to perpetuate the culture by serving as a catalyst in the socialization of its citizens. In order to accomplish these feats, however, it is necessary for young people to be in school. Educators must ask themselves several pertinent questions: (1) How can students be motivated to come to school? (2) How can students be motivated to remain in school long enough to complete minimum requirements? (3) How can the school environment be humanized so that students will feel free to communicate their problems so the curriculum can be developed to reflect their needs? (4) How can students be motivated to want to learn once they decide to remain in school? To motivate them to come to school is by no means a small feat, but to motivate them to learn is a Herculean task.

With these questions remaining unanswered, the researcher was motivated to look for educational strategies and innovations that will enhance the students' chances of remaining in school and, while in school, provide the kinds of learning experiences that will encourage them to want to learn.

It is the belief of the researcher that alternative education programs have the potential to retain students in school and, at the same time, provide the kinds of psychological and educational experiences wherein students can learn how to learn.

Definition of Terms

The following terms will have the following meanings in this study.

Alternative School. An educational approach which is student-centered as well as subject-centered and designed to provide basic education and survival skills for dropouts.

Compare. An analysis of the differences and similarities that exist between psychological and educational variables.

Gain. The difference between pre-and post-test results.

High School Student. Ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade students who have accumulated the number of units required for their respective grade level placements.

Traditional School. An educational approach which is designed to meet the educational needs of school-age individuals.

Educational Characteristics

Educational Characteristics will have the following meaning in this study.

Academic Achievement. The participants' reading, writing and mathematics scores on the Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP).

Academic Performance. The participants' first semester grade-point averages (GPA's) on a four-point scale.

Attendance. The number of days the participants were present

for the first semester, according to the 1985-86 attendance records.

Truancy. Number of days the participants were absent from school without parental consent or knowledge.

Psychological Characteristics

The following psychological characteristics will have the following meanings in this study.

Career Maturity. The participants' scores on the Career Maturity Inventory.

Disruptive School Behavior. The number and kind of disciplinary referrals made to the administrators office.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

For clarification purposes, the literature surveyed for the development of this study was presented as follows: (1) Characteristics of Adolescence, (2) Self-concept and Academic Achievement, (3) Anxiety and Academic Performance, (4) Attendance, (5) Career Maturity, (6) Parenting and Disruptive School Behavior, (7) Characteristics of the Dropout, and (8) Evaluation of Alternative Education Programs.

Characteristics of Adolescents

According to Adams, the adolescent is a person who is no longer a child, but not yet an adult. The word adolescence is a derivative of the Latin term "adolescents," which means "growing up," or "growing toward."[1] The adolescent is a person who is growing toward adulthood. The term is further defined as a transition of bridge between childhood and adulthood.[2]

The beginning and the end of adolescence are not clearly

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[1]James F. Adams, Understanding Adolescence: Current Developments in Adolescent Psychology (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1976), p. 18.

[2]Phillip F. Rice, Adolescent Development, Relationships and Culture (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1975), p. 30.

delineated and are not the same for every person.[1] The range and dimension of this state of development are at best loosely determined by such factors as: (a) chronological age, (b) biological or sexual development, (c) societal expectations, (d) legal age, and (e) psychological development.[2]

In most western societies, a person is considered to be an adolescent roughly from ages thirteen to at least eighteen years of age. Adolescence, in these societies, corresponds closely to the "teenage" years. In many societies boys and girls are considered to have outgrown adolescence upon reaching puberty, that point in human development when an individual can reproduce his/her own kind.[3] Biological maturity begins during the late "preteens" or early "teens."

According to Horracks, girls reach puberty approximately during the years between nine and twelve; while boys arrive at puberty between eleven and fourteen. He offered a non-biological definition of adolescence. He maintained that the period ended when an individual attained emotional and social maturity, and a willingness to assume consistently over a wide range of activities, the role of an adult as it is defined by the culture in

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[1]Karl C. Garrison, Psychology of Adolescence (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), p. 2.

[2]Ibid.

[3]G. Stanley Hall, Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relation to Psysiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex Crime, Religion and Education (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1904), vol. 1 chapters 1, 2, and 13.

which he lives.[1] Society, however, determines when an individual is expected or permitted to assume full adult responsibility, In agricultural societies, such as African, Asian and Latin American, young people are expected to become economically independent upon reaching sexual maturity. In these societies, adolescent is brief, if it is observed at all.[2]

In industrial societies, however, child labor laws delay full entry of young people into the labor market; therefore, in these societies young people are not permitted to become self-supporting before reaching eighteen years of age. Today, in the United States, in most Canadian provinces and in many European countries, a person is legally an adult at eighteen years of age.[3]

According to psychologists, adolescence may also be based on psychological development. From their perspective, an adolescent is a person who is learning to be independent. Again, some people reach this goal earlier than others. Psychological maturity is determined to a large extent by societal standards.[4]

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[1]John E. Horracks, The Psychology of Adolescence (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976), p. 13.

[2]Hall, Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relation to Psysiology, Anthropolgy, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education, vol. 1. chapters 1, 2, and 13.

[3]Adams, Understanding Adolescence: Current Developments in Adolescent Psychology, p. 22.

[4]Ibid.

Although adolescence is a natural phenomenon, in western culture it is the most complex and misunderstood period in the cycle of human development.

Various concepts of adolescence attempted to explain or account for the unique characteristics of the period. The following discussion will focus on the age of adolescence from the perspectives of a few representative and influential writers holding different viewpoints. They are cited as follows: (a) G. Stanley Hall, a biological view, (b) Sigmund Freud, a psychoanalytic view, (c) Erik Erikson, a socio-psychoanalytical view, (d) Kurt Lewin, a psychological view, (e) Margaret Mead, an anthropological view, (f) Robert Havinghurst, a psycho-social view, and (f) Allison Davis, a sociological view.[1]

A biological concept of adolescence is supported by Hall. He maintains that adolescence is a period of physical and sexual maturation at which time the child's body experiences important growth changes. These rapid and sometimes sudden changes produce internal turmoil which causes instability and unpredictability on the personality of the adolescent. The adolescent personality fluctuates between energy and indifference, gaiety and depression, or egoism and bashfulness. Thus, the individual appears to be in a constant state of "storm and stress."[2]

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[1]Adams, Understanding Adolescence: Current Development in Adolescent Psychology, p. 25.

[2]Hall, Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relation to Psysiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education, vol. 1, chapters 1, 2, and 13.

Since Freud considers only the first five years of a child's life as being crucial to the development of the personality, he is not too concerned with adolescence. He does, however, deal briefly with adolescence in his Three Essays of the Theory of Sexuality. He describes adolescence as a period of sexual excitement, anxiety and sometimes personality disturbance.[1]

Erik Erikson describes human development in terms of the entire life span, which he divides into eight stages, each of which is characterized by a specifically assigned task that must be adequately satisfied before the individual can move successfully to the next stage of development. He views adolescence as the transition stage between childhood and adulthood. During this stage, the young person struggles to gain control of his own life so he can establish an identity independent of his parents or other authority figure.[2] According to Erikson, the adolescent is a social being, and during the stage of adolescence, the young person is more concerned with becoming a part of a peer group with whom he can identify, than he is with allying with his parents.

Kurt Lewin, an interaction theorist, views adolescence from a psychological perspective. He maintains that the combination of

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[1]Sigmund Freud, Three Essays in the Theory of Sexuality (London: The Hogarth Press, 1938), p. 33.

[2]Erik Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950), p. 132.

rapid physical changes and social changes taking place in the young person's life, and conflicting expectations of contemporary society, place the young person in a state of confusion. Since the adolescent is considered neither a child, or an adult, he is placed in an ambiguous posture. The duality of postures produces anxiety and conflict and causes the behavior of the adolescent to be sporadic and inconsistent.

Robert Havinghurst, a proponent of the developmental task concept, assumes a psycho-social theory of adolescence by balancing the consideration of the individual's needs with the demands of society. A combination of the individual's needs coupled with the demands of society form the tasks each individual has to achieve at a given stage of his life through physical maturation, social expectations and personal effort.[1]

HAVINGHURST"S DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

Period	Age Range	Developmental Task
Infancy	0-1 1/2 years	Creeping, interpreting sensations, adapting to feeding schedule, weaning, learning to manipulate objects.
Early Childhood	2-4 years	Walking, talking, accepting social regulations, identifying with parent, developing social skills.

[1]Robert Havinghurst, Developmental Tasks and Education (New York: Longmans and Green, 1951), p. 82.

Early School Years	5-9 years	Adjusting to organization, controlling emotions, accepting rules and rights of others, personal grooming, developing play and skills, learning school work, acquiring play skills.
Middle Childhood	10-11 years	Participating in group activities, conducting long-range projects, working by self, earning money, developing interests.
Early Adolescence	12-16 years	Dating, planning for future, needing less direction, being accepting by opposite sex, accepting own physical and mental abilities, acquiring a vocational direction.
Late Adolescence	17-20 years	Preparing for work, courting, sticking to schedule and completing tasks, deciding by self and taking responsibility, selecting vocational goal and working toward it.
Early Adulthood	21-35 years	Mating, establishing home, starting in occupation, rearing children, accepting civic responsibility.
Middle Age	35-59 years	Helping younger people, developing leisure time activities, fulfilliing civic and social responsibilities, adjusting to physiological changes with age.

Late Maturity	60 + years	Adjusting to decreasing strength, retiring, adjusting to death of spouse and affiliating with one's age group.

Successful attainment of these tasks leads to individual happiness and to success with later tasks; while failure leads to both unhappiness in the individual and disapproval by society and difficulty with later tasks. Mastery of the tasks at each stage of development leads to adjustment and preparation for more difficult future tasks.

Anthropologists describe many conditions in western culture which lead themselves to turbulent and unpredictable behavior in adolescence. Rapidity of social change, pluralistic value systems and modern technology make the world seem too complex, amorphous and unstable to the adolescent to provide him with a stable frame of reference. Margaret Mead's empirical field studies of primitive cultures show the role that culture plays in personality and socialization. She reveals, for example, that the Samoan child's growth pattern is continued without any abrupt changes from one age to the other. He does not have to make abrupt changes in his mode of thinking and acting. The activities that he engages in as a child naturally leads to the work he will perform as an adult. One phase of activity is a continuation of his childhood recreation.[1]

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[1]Margaret Mead, From the South Seas: Studies in Adolescence and Sex in Primitive Societies, vol. 1 of three anthropological works: Coming of Age in Samoa, Growing Up in New Guinea, and Sex and Temperament.

Freeman challenges Mead's findings, Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth. He systematically examines the entire range of Mead's writings on the particulars of the behaviors and customs of the Samoan people. With special adolescence, Freeman maintains that the attainment of puberty in the Samoan adolescent is marked by the involvement of the adolescent in aggressive encounters of various kinds. In many respects, these young people are not different from many young people in Western society.

According to a 1965 police record, delinquency rates are high among Samoan youth, especially young males. Samoan adolescents from fourteen years of age onward are involved in stressful situations which are sexually related.[1] Police records show forty-five convictions for indecent assaults, rape, attempted rape, and 42 per cent of the offenders are males between fourteen and nineteen years of age. During that same period of time 218 acts of violence are reported for Samoan females. Freeman argues that these findings show empirical evidence that refute Mead's assertion that adolescence in Samoa was "the age of maximum ease."

One's position on the socioeconomic scale often presents problems for the adolescent. Young people who are members of certain social or economic groups are often socially ostracized.

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[1]Derek Freeman, Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 256-268.

In studying adolescence, the sociologist emphasizes the influences that the social environment has on the young person.[1] The social environment is an important determinant of adolescent behavior. Allison Davis studied the effects of ethnic and social rejection on the psyches of young people. It is noted that these experiences are detrimental not only to the young person, but to society at large. Since many Black parents occupy a position on the lower rung of the socioeconomic ladder, Black children are victims of "social isolation" based not only on their culture, but on their social status as well. According to Davis, the authorities of each culture define different acceptable behaviors for their members. Socially dictated behaviors create "social anxiety" and produce "strain and stress" on young people. These societal pressures, in turn, have a chaotic effect on the personalities of the young.[2]

This presentation, so far, has focused on the general characteristics of adolescence from biological, psycho-sexual, psychological developmental influences that impact on adolescent development and behavior. In addition to these essential aspects, cognitive development and functioning also play an

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[1]David E. Hunt, "Adolescence: Cultural Deprivation, Poverty, and the Dropout," Review of Educational Research 36 (October 1969), p. 468.

[2]Allison Davis, "Socialization and Adolescent Personality," in Adolescence Yearbook of National Society for the Study of Education (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1941), p. 39.

important role in the pattern of human development and behavior. Maturing involves physical as well as mental growth. Physically, it means the attainment of one's fullest physical statue, the acquisition of physical features which characterize the mature individual and the development of the reproductive organs.[1] Mental maturity means that the individual has reached his maximum cognitive growth as identified by tests of intelligence. It is reasonable also to expect that the emotional and social components will be acquired.

Piaget identifies three stages of human development. The first stage begins at birth and lasts until the child is eighteen months old. This stage is known as the sensorimotor stage of development. During this stage, the individual experiences reflex activities, motor skills, perceptions and the start of intentional acts. During the second stage of development, which starts at eighteen months and ends at eleven years, symbolic thought processes and problem-solving behavior patterns come to fore. These processes are the results of previous sensorimotor experiences. During the third stage, the individual organizes a cognitive network which facilitates abstract thinking, a more advanced stage of cognitive functioning.[2]

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[1]Elizabeth B. Hurlock, Adolescent Development (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1955), p. 3.

[2]Jean Piaget, The Origins of Intelligence in Children (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1952), p. 1.

The young person acquires mental maturity during adolescence. The precise age of acquisition is blurred and varies from individual to individual.[1] Some individuals experience emotional control and social adaptability during the early adolescent years. when the young person is able to rely on conceptual thinking, he reflects maturity in thought. This process is evident in many young people around fourteen and fifteen years old.[2] Learning during adolescence, like learning during earlier stages, involves the setting up of complex connections, which result from maturation and experience.

In summary, during the adolescent period, the normal young person grows in many intellectual directions. He develops and expands his learning potential. His ability to grasp relationships and to solve complex problems is expanded. He learns to deal with abstract ideas, while at the same time, he acquires abilities that are measured by intelligence tests. In addition, he gains a breadth of knowledge and depth of understanding which enable him to exercise practical wisdom, sound judgment and common sense.

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[1]Lester D. Crow and Alice Crow, Adolescent Development and Adjustment (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1965), p. 3.

[2]B. R. McCandless and E. D. Evans, Children and Youth: Psycho-Social Development (Hindsdale, Illinois: Dryden Press, 1973), p. 188.

Self-Concept and Adacemic Achievement

Self-concept, in the hands of different theorists may be presented in a wide range of settings and take on various meanings. Different theorists may refer to this same phenomenon under an assortment of names which refer essentially to the same variable. A sample of related means include such terms as self-love, self-confidence, self-respect, self-acceptance or self-rejection, self-worth, a sense of adequacy, or satisfaction, self-evaluation, self-appraisal, personal efficacy, sense of competence, and ego strength. Each of these terms in some way indicates some basic process of psychological functioning which can be described as self-evaluation, or self-esteem, or some combination of the two.[1]

Although there exists no consensus regarding the definition of self-concept, it is broadly defined as the "core" or the essence of human existence as it is known to the individual.[2] To psychologists, the subjective "self" includes all the ideas, beliefs, values and conceptions of an individual's past lives, background and future prospects. So strong is the influence of this invisible substance that it can engross the human spirit to

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[1]L. Edward Wells and Gerald Marwell, Self-Esteem (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1976), pp. 6-7.

[2]Morris Rosenberg, Society and the Adolescent Self-Image (Princeton: University Press, 1965), p. VIII.

the point of regulating human behavior. The self-concept is a unique characteristic of the human being which gives him the exclusive privilege of seeing himself as no one else can.

A casual glance at self-concept will make it appear that this phenomenon is a purely private, personal and idiosyncratic one. Yet, those who subscribe to the self-concept theory, maintain that the individual's concept of self reflects the influence of his social interactions.[1] The noted psychiatrist, Harry Stack Sullivan is one of many authorities who emphasizes the powerful influence of a parent, more specifically the mother or the "mothering" person on the development of the self-concept of the child. According to Sullivan, a child's feelings of security may be enhanced or diminished by the degree to which the mother, or "mothering" person accepts or rejects the child.

Studies by Coopersmith reveal that child-rearing practices relate highly to the level of self-esteem displayed by young people. For example, Coopersmith found that mothers whose sons exhibited high levels of self-esteem used reward and praise as opposed to punishment in correcting behavior problems [2] Olsen also reports that children whose parents display "warmth and

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[1]A. W. Combs, D. W. Super and C. C. Courson, "The Measurement of Self-Concept and Self-Report," Educational and Psychological Measurement 23 (1963): 493-500.

[2]S. Coopersmith, The Antecedents of Self-Esteem, (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1967).

affection" have more positive self-esteem than do children whose parents are rejecting.[1]

Also, according to Coopersmith, human behavior is a function of the expectations and evaluations of significant others to the person as perceived by him and as internalized in a self-conception of what is appropriate and proper for him to do and what he is able to do. The level of academic achievement is influenced by the individual's concept of his academic ability. According to a study by Davison and Lang, children's perceptions of their teachers' attitudes toward them and their own self-concept influence academic achievement, and classroom behavior. Teachers who are perceived as having favorable attitudes toward their students have fewer problems with disruptive behavior and higher academic achievement on the part of their students.[2]

The "Pygmalion" theory of the "self-fulfilling prophesy" is demonstrated in a study conducted by Rosenthal and Jacobson. Teachers were informed that a particular group of randomly selected students were intellectually endowed. These students, who in truth, were of average intellectual functioning excelled students of exceptional ability. The investigators concluded that teacher aspirations and expectations had a dramatic and

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[1]H. D. Olsen, "A Comparison of Academic Self-Concept, Significant Others, of Black and White Pre-College Students," Child Study Journal 1 (1970): 28-32.

[2]H. H. Davison and G. Lang, "Children's Perception of Their Teachers' Feelings Toward Them Related to Self-Perception, School Achievement and Behavior," in Teaching Social Studies to Culturally Different Children, eds. J. A. Banks and W. W. Joyce (Reading Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company,

significant influence on these students' achievement. In other words, the study shows that students will produce in accordance with their teachers' expectations.[1]

In 1963, Gordon and Wood conducted a different type of study related to self-concept. In this study, fifth and sixth graders attempted to determine the nature of the relationship between teachers' and students' evaluation of scholastic achievement. The study revealed that teachers were unable to accurately predict how students would judge themselves on self-reports about their attitudes toward school, their teachers and estimations of their own test performance. It was further indicated that students tend to underestimate and overestimate their ability on equal bases. It was not determined to what, if any extent, the teachers estimation of the children influenced their test performance, nor whether the students viewed the evaluation as a threat.[2]

Contemporary research in the area of the self-concept centers on the significance of the concept of self as it relates to Black Americans. His concept of self has been influenced and modified by the life experiences which are uniquely black. Wyne, White

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1971), p. 130.

[1]R. Rosenthal and L. Jacobson, Pygmalion in the Classroom: Teacher Expectations and Pupils Intellectual Ability (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), p. 142.

[2]I. J. Gordon and P. C. Wood, "The Relationship Between Pupil Self-Evaluation of the Pupil and Scholastic Achievement," The Journal of Educational Research 9 (1973): 9-33.

and Coop cite the profundity of the self-concept theory as it was espoused by a wise elderly Black woman:

> Yes, we is all the same under God, so we has the same problems, but colored folk has special ones, too. It's the same being colored as white, but it's different being colored too ... It's the same, but it's different.[1]

The self-concept of the Black-American is damaged by the overwhelming fact that the world in which he lives says "White is right; Black is bad." The intent of White America is to impact on the black psyche so as to over value all those traits of the white world and to undervalue those traits that are identified with blackness. Allport asks,

> What would happen to your own personality if it is said over and over again that you were lazy, a simple child of nature expected to steal, and had inferior blood. Suppose this opinion were forced on you by the majority of your fellow citizens. And suppose nothing you could do would change this opinion - because you happen to have black skin.[2]

The historical and traditional forces which shaped the black concept represents a unique social phenomenon. The legacy of slavery left an indelible mark on the black psyche. The Black American is bi-cultural and bi-dialectical. He is part white, yet he is not permitted to function in the white world. He is part black, but the black world in which he functions is scorned

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[1]M. D. Wyne, K. P. White, and R. H. Coop, The Black Self (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974), p. ix.

[2]Amos N. Wilson, The Developmental Psychology of the Black Child (New York: Africana Research, 1978), p. 51.

by the white world. The English language which he has adapted to express the delicate nuances of his own forgotten native tongue is also rejected by the white world. The linguistic differences have been documented in the literature.[1] Besides the use of idioms and patois that is uniquely black, this language is augmented by considerable body language. This body language is a modality for maintaining rhythm and expression which the so-called standard English is unable to communicate.[2]

Whittington gives a step-by-step outline of the complexity of the problem focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of the different historical and functional approaches to understanding the structure of the black family as a means of understanding the Black self-concept.[3] The stresses and strains on the modern black family are qualitatively different from those in the white family even when the socio-economic status factor is constant. The poor have never lived in comfort, and the struggle for national survival has certainly made psychologically adequate survival extremely problematical anywhere in the world. The situation of the Black family today in the United States is

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[1]J. Dillard, Black English: Its History and Usage in the U.S. (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 148.

[2]Gordon W. Allport, The Nature of Prejudice (Reading, Massachusetts: A Brief Review of Critique," Journal of Social and Behavioral Science 19 (1972): 18-37.

[3]Robert L. Sutherland, Color, Class and Personality (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1942), p. 41.

qualitatively different on a number of important counts. Most Black children inherit a family which is economically insecure from the very beginning. Most of them live at the edge of survival, and those who have moved a little bit away have a constant fear of a future which may reduce them to desperation and economic insufficiency.

According to Sutherland, the important point, is that while many of the conditions reported are a result of acute and continued poverty, a major ingredient is also the color-caste of the Black American. One of the child's early racial learnings is that he cannot turn to his parents for help and retaliation if he is hurt. Sutherland writes,

> A white man yanked me off a streetcar because I got on ahead of a white woman. He shook me good and tore my clothes. I walked home crying, knowing that my father would do something about it.[1]

But the father could do no more than remark, "you should have known better." The denial of a parent of his role in protecting his own child is deeply destructive, not only to the parental feeling, but to the possibility that the child will not look to his parents as adult models.[2] It is clear that the life experiences of the Black child are not as such as to aid in developing a positive sense of himself or of his place in the world.

There is an attempt to deny the existence of a black self, or

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[1]Ibid.

[2]L. X. Weems, "Black Community Research Needs, Methods, Models and Modalities" presented at the Institute for Urban Affairs and Research, Howard University, Washington, D.C. for the Conference on "Developing Research Priorities for the Black

a black psychology. This issue has been strongly debated by various experts in the field of psychology. Weems argues, however, that in order to understand the concept of the self, one must be aware of the African philosophical background undergirding the self-concepts of the Black American.[1] He further maintains that black psychology grows out of a system of concepts and constructs emanating from African perspectives on the nature of man and his relationship to his environment. It is uniquely different from western psychology because it is not rooted in the European tradition. To deny the existence of a black concept is tantamount to denying the existence of one's being.

Nobles corroborates Weems' theory of the black "self" as it relates to African philosophy. He defines African philosophy as understanding, attitude of mind, logic and perceptions behind the manner in which African people think, act, or speak in different life situations. Regardless of the tribe to which one belongs this philosophy is the essence of the African existence. According to Nobles, the restraints imposed by racial segregation practices which are designed to destroy the African philosophical orientation, served to encourage it instead.[2]

Community," June 25, 1973.

[1]W. W. Nobles, "African Philosophy: Foundations for Black Psychology," in Black Psychology, ed. R. L. Jones (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 85.

[2]Basil B. Bernstein, "A Critique of the Concept of Compensatory Education," in Opening Opportunities for Disadvantaged Learners, ed. Harry A. Passow (New York: Columbia

Black individuals from early on are socialized into accepting inferior social status. Children who are labeled "culturally deprived," will look at their parents as being inadequate and the spontaneous realizations of their culture, its images and symbolic representations will be of reduced values and significance. Textbooks, the news media, schools and other cultural institutions all inform Black individuals that those things that give purpose and meaning to them is of little value, sub-standard and of no significance. In order to be successful, the Black child has to orient toward a different structure of meaning, whether it is in the form of basal readers (Dick and Jane), or in the form of language use in dialect, or in the patterns of social relationships. Black individuals are expected to drop their social identity as well as their way of life and its symbolic representations at the school gate. For by definition, their culture is deprived, their parents inadequate in both the moral and skill orders they transmit.[1] These repeated injunctions over a long period of time may have negative influences on the black concept of self.

In 1970, Denmark studied the variables which relate to academic achievement and self-concept changes experienced by black children who were removed from segregated environments into

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University Press, 1971), p. 74.

[1]F. L. Denmark, "The Effect of Integration on Academic Achievement and Self-Concept," Integrated Education 8 (1970): 34-41.

integrated classrooms. The study revealed that both their academic achievement and self-concept in grades one through five were inversely related to the kinds of interracial interactions the children experienced. Teachers' ratings in verbal skills were significantly lower and teachers established higher comparison levels for Black children after integration. Black children with higher verbal skills associated more with White children and their self-concepts were lower than that of Black students with lower verbal skills who did not associate with White children. The investigator concluded that teacher attitude and expectation, whether verbalized or not, have a harmful effect on the self-concepts of students.[1]

A two-fold study of Nails focused on: (1) the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement, and (2) the influence of teacher perceptions on academic achievement. The findings from the initial and final examination showed no significance of self-concept among groups of black high school students enrolled in either predominately black or white schools on a voluntary basis, or those who attended predominately white schools by court order for a period of one year.[2]

Brookover conducted a six-year study of Black children. The

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[1]O. Nails, "Positive Self-Concept as an Influence of Academic Achievement in Inner City School, Jefferson Jr. High School/Whittier Elementary Complex: An Institutional Analysis" (Ph.D. dissertation, Wayne State University, 1970), p. 138-A.

[2]W. B. Brookover, E. Erickson, and L. Jones, "Self-Concept of Ability and School Achievement," in Teaching Social Studies to Culturally Different Children, eds. J. E. Banks and W. W. Joyce (Reading, Massachusetts, Addison-Wesley, 1971), p. 78.

findings indicated a correlation between self-concept of ability and grade point average which ranged from .48 to .63 over the six-year study. The study did not show whether socio-economic status or measured intelligence had an influence on perceived evaluations by teachers self-concept of ability and grade point average.[1]

In summary, human behavior is directed not only by the way an individual feels about himself, but also how the individual feels he is perceived by significant others in his life. Self-concept, an invisible entity, permeates every aspect of the human life experience, including academic achievement. Studies repeatedly show high correlations between the individual's picture of himself and academic attainment. Authorities maintain that the social restraints imposed by the White social structure on the Black American may have made insidious impressions on their self-concepts.

Anxiety and Academic Performance

A review of the related literature gives evidence that problems related academic performance vary in quantity and in kind. According to the literature, anxiety ranks high in its impact on the academic performance of young individuals. The way a child experiences and internalizes the forces within his environment will be reflected in his intellectual functioning.

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[1]Sigmund Freud, as cited by Seymour B. Sarason in Anxiety in Elementary School Children (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1960), p. 30.

Although the concept of anxiety is as old as the concept of philosophy and religion in the thinking of mankind; Freud is recognized as the forerunner in attempting to identify the casual factors of anxiety and to show how these factors overlap and combine to impact on the general psychological human condition.[1]

Freud views anxiety from a biological perspective. As a construct, anxiety is an ungoverned and automatic reaction to a combination of sensory, motor and psychological experiences which are incorporated in the central nervous system of the human organism at birth and continues throughout life. As an infant, the individual has not learned effective ways of coping with anxiety, so his responses are ungoverned. Automatic responses to anxiety will continue until the infant learns to anticipate anxiety producing situations and to develop effective ways of controlling his anxiety. According to Sarason, strategies developed during early childhood for controlling anxiety are a significant determinant of later human behavior.[2]

Today's highly accelerated, technological and competitive society subjects all persons to stress causing situations. Young people are especially vulnerable to anxiety producing conditions related to social issues. They include school related issues,

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[1]Ibid, p. 24.

[2]Hans Selye, Stress Without Distress (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1974), p. 148.

integration, divorce, crime, substance abuse, child abuse, and other problems that impact on adolescent functioning. Today's adolescent is confronted with more anxiety producing conditions than were his predecessors.

Although anxiety is universal, the way in which the individual manages his anxiety makes it a unique experience for each person. There is no overall successful method of coping with anxiety. The way one chooses to handle anxiety will depend upon the types of anxiety as well as the circumstances. Individual characteristics, such as age, sex, temperament, genetic factors and intellectual level play a major role in influencing coping strategies employed by individuals.[1] Research shows that a person's cognitive appraisal of life events has a strong impact on his behavior.

Contemporary society places a high priority on performance and achievement. Many studies focus on factors that promote or deter achievement. In Children Under Pressure, Doll maintains that throughout the nation, pressure is placed on young people to excel academically. Many authorities on human behavior feel that too much emphasis on academic achievement can create undue stress and strain on the emotional health of the child.[2]

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[1]Ronald Doll, Children Under Pressure (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Publishing Company, 1966), p. 23.

[2]Mandler and Sarason, "A Study of Anxiety and Learning," Journal of Abnormal Psychology 47 (1952): 164.

According to Mandler and Sarason, anxiety can serve as a deterrent to both the cognitive as well as the emotional development of an individual. Two studies by Mandler and Sarason investigate the role that anxiety plays in evoking responses during a test-taking situation. They argue that anxiety which manifests itself during test-taking situations can have a significant effect on the performance of the student. One study investigates the feelings and experiences of a group of Yale students in a test-taking situation. The authors conclude that anxiety present during the test situation has a significant impact on test performance.[1]

The second study was also carried out at Yale College. A questionnaire was presented to 154 sophomores and juniors enrolled in an introductory psychology course. The questionnaire was designed to reveal the students' attitudes and feelings toward: (1) group intelligence tests, (2) individual tests, (3) course examinations, and (4) general questions. A second questionnaire was administered and yielded a distribution of 101 participants along a presumed anxiety continuum. Twenty-one participants with the highest scores and forty-two subjects with the lowest scores participated in the actual study.[2]

Again, the findings support the concept that anxiety present

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[1]Ibid., p. 165.

[2]M. R. Goldfried, "Systematic Desensitization as Training in Self-Control," Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 37 (1971): 228-234.

during the testing situation influences test performance. There is a question, however, as to whether intelligence test scores adequately represent the underlying abilities of students with high anxiety levels in a testing situation since there is a high correlation between the kind of test to the test performance. This study further shows that anxiety can improve as well as depress test scores. Many students perform well under stress; while other perform poorly.

Many attempts have been made to help reduce debilitative test anxiety experienced by students. Goldfried describes a desensitization process that can be used as a means for training clients to learn how to exert control over their feelings of anxiety. He suggests that clients be told that they are learning relaxation skills that will help them develop strategies for coping with anxiety. The treatment sessions are to be devoted to training them to relax, teaching them how to recognize tension, so they will know when to begin the relaxation techniques, and giving them time to practice desensitization activities on a set of anxiety provoking situations. Clients are to be told to actively use their emerging relaxation skills in various life situations. Goldfried recommends that scenes being visualized should not end when the client's behavior indicates a disruption in his feelings of relaxation; rather he should continue to imagine the scenes while attempting to relax himself into a state of deep relaxation. When the client reaches a state of deep relaxa-

tion, he should signal when this state has been reached. The scene visualization may then be terminated.[1]

Spiegler et al., report that self-control desensitization is an effective treatment for test anxiety. There was a significant difference between the levels of test anxiety exhibited by self-control participants and non self-control participants.[2]

An experimental study on anxiety was carried out on one thousand male students enrolled in an introductory course in psychology at Duke University. Twenty percent of the students at each end of the anxiety scale were designated as high (HA) and low (LA) anxiety groups.[3]

At the end of the semester, the grade point average (GPA) was computed from the official university records and grades were awarded on a four-point scale. The study shows that the academic performance of students who had been determined high anxiety was significantly lower than the academic performance of students who exhibited low anxiety levels. These findings are an indication that high levels of anxiety might negatively influence academic performance.

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[1]M. D. Spiegler et al., "A Self-Control Versus a Counter-Conditioning Paradigm for Systematic Desensitization: An Experimental Comparison," Journal of Counseling Psychology 23 (1976): 83-86.

[2]Charles Spielberger, Understanding Stress and Anxiety (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), pp. 83-85.

[3]Peggy G. Elliott, "Student and Teacher Absenteeism in Secondary Schools," Viewpoints in Teaching and Learning 54 (1978): 54.

There was no statistically significant difference in the grade point averages of high achievers and low achievers in the lowest and highest scholastic aptitude. The students with high scholastic aptitudes received good grades regardless of their levels of anxiety. In a like manner, the students with low aptitudes received poor grades regardless of their levels of anxiety. The investigators concluded that academic performance is influenced by ability rather than levels of anxiety.

In a summary, research findings suggest that anxiety is a universal characteristic in human beings that has a significant influence on human behavior with special reference to academic performance. Freud is thought to be the first to study this phenomenon in a psychological framework.

Attendance

In spite of compulsory attendance laws which were established to control school absenteeism and to combat the abuse of child labor, absenteeism continues to be a problem of major concern for administrators and school districts. The National Center for Education Statistics, a subsidiary of the United States Office of Education, studied historical data on school attendance from 1929 to 1972. The report documented evidence that the average daily attendance (ADA) has continually increased during this period from 82.8 percent in 1929-30 to 92.3 percent in 1975-76. An estimated average daily attendance from the fall of 1970 to the

fall of 1975 was 92.1 percent. When consolidated, an estimated 8 percent of the children enrolled in the nation's schools are absent from school on a typical school day.[1]

Poor school attendance is national in scope. According to a report from the New York State Department of Education in 1975, inner city schools in large urban areas experience the highest rates of absenteeism. Many low socio-economic districts in New York, New Orleans, Baltimore and Philadelphia report absentee rates that approach 50 percent. In these cities, absentee rates among non-white students have reached epidemic proportions. These youths who withdraw from school before completing the requirements for graduation from secondary school are in double jeopardy because of the lack of sufficient mastery of basic skills and adequate vocational training. Opportunities for these young people are extremely restricted since few alternatives exist for them in this highly structured and organized society.

The Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency made a survey of five hundred U.S. school districts and concluded that schools are in a state of crisis with violence and vandalism running rampant. Many students apparently have lost interest in academics as well as extracurricular activities of any formal kind; rather they intimidate teachers, their fellow classmates and generally

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[1]S. Thomson and D. Stanard, "Student Attendance and Absenteeism," The Practitioner 1 (1975): 19.

create havoc in school. Among this group can be found students who eventually will not attend school at all, or at least not enough to master the basic skills required for useful and productive citizenship.[1]

The finding of a study by Levanto on schools in the Connecticut Public School System are summarized as follows: (1) student attendance is highest on Wednesdays, Thursdays and days of important assignments or examinations; (2) during the first three years of high school, boys generally have better attendance profiles than do girls at the same grade level; (3) students who live in intact families (with both parents) have better attendance than do students who live in single-parent homes; (4) students enrolled in academic programs have high attendance levels followed by students in business education and general education programs respectively; (5) among the seniors who participated in the study, students with the highest IQ scores have low rates of absenteeism; (6) absenteeism is lowest among seniors who participate in extra-curricular activities; (7) Black students have higher absentee rates than do White students; and (8) students with low personality ratings by their teachers usually had higher rates of absenteeism than do students who receive high personality ratings from their teachers.[2]

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[1]B. Cutts, "South Leads in Growing School Crimes," The Atlanta Constution, 10 April 1975, pp. 1-23A.

[2]Joseph Levanto, "High School Absenteeism," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin 59 (October 1975): 100-104.

A poll conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals indicates that school administrators consider poor attendance as their most serious problem. The numerous man hours spent trying to bring the absentee problem under control could be more efficiently used in working with those students who attend school voluntarily. In many urban school systems throughout the country, absentee rates have reached 50 percent.

Research related to school attendance will show that poor school attendance is influenced by many factors: (1) economic conditions, (2) parental attitudes, (3) peer pressure, (4) teacher attitudes, (5) inadequate curriculum, and (6) the lack of enforcement of compulsory attendance laws.[1] This problem becomes even more depressing when one considers that America makes education accessible to all of its citizens.

Non-attendance becomes more of a problem among the many young people who are not enrolled in school at all. The scope of this problem alone is so broad that the exact numbers are not known. In 1969, the Bureau of the Census reported that 450,000 children between the ages of six and fifteen were not enrolled in school. This report is considered an underestimate because it is a projection based on 50,000 students. One may safely assume that many disadvantaged children are not included. These non-

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[1]W. V. Grant, "School Retention Rates," American Education 9 (1973): 3.

enrollees have become a societal problem rather than an educational one. School systems present many reasons for excluding these students. Since many parents do not know their rights, they do not challenge systems that exclude children on the basis of age requirements or because special services are not available.[1] At the same time, there are parents who are too lethargic or indifferent toward their children's education to take decisive steps. Even though most states have compulsory attendance laws, many systems rarely enforce them. In this highly mobile society, many families move frequently. Children of these families are often not enrolled in school because parents find this repeated process to be too bothersome.

Many young people are either not enrolled or enrolled, and attend school on an irregular basis. Educational systems maintain that these students are not in school because of personal preference; however, school systems have many hidden ways of excluding students who refuse to comply with school rules and regulations. Hundreds of thousands of children lose millions of school days annually because of a wide range of disciplinary devices. They include suspensions and expulsions.[2]

In an interview, John Lily, Principal of Carew Street Elementary School in Springfield, Massachusetts said:

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[1]Children's Defense Fund, Children Out of School in America (New York: Washing Research Projects, Inc., 1974), p. 120.

[2]Ibid.

> ... with approximately 13,000 suspensions imposed by principals last year, we can only guess at how many thousands of school days children have needlessly lost because so many principals refuse to abide by the law.[1]

In many school systems, continuous suspensions are used to keep chronic disruptors out of school. The student is suspended with reinstatement pending a parental conference. This form of suspension poses a problem for the working parent who finds it difficult to leave work for each breach of discipline. Parents with small children are often unable to keep reinstatement appointments because their young ones may be ill. Meanwhile, the suspended student cannot return to school until the parent/guardian brings him in, or until the maximum length of time permitted by the district expires. This student is forced out of school either by coercion, rejection, or because he has fallen so far behind in his school work, he sees no possible way of ever catching up. He becomes a drifter and eventually drifts away without anyone trying to "save" him.[2]

Ironically, many school districts use reducing grades and suspensions to reduce truancy. Although courts have supported some school systems that employ this method, there is strong opposition to this practice. In the case of Knight vs. the Board of Education of Tri-Point Community School District in Chicago,

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[1]Ibid., p. 90.

[2]Ibid., p. 114.

the decision was in favor of the Board of Education.[1] The decision was that the student had not been denied equal protection or due process under the law when his grades were lowered one letter for two unexcused absences from school. The courts determined that the "punishment" was appropriate for the offense. A problem may arise, however, if it cannot be clearly demonstrated that the student's absences are a causal factor which prevent him from mastering the course requirements.

A study by the members of the Children's Defense Fund reveals that 24.5 percent of suspensions are related to truancy and tardiness.[2] The members contend that suspensions are not answers to the problem. In addition, this practice has proven to be counter-productive, since suspending for truancy legitimizes the student's otherwise illegal absence. The Office of Civil Rights provide data which show that even though Blacks made up only 27 percent of the total school enrollment, they account for 42 percent of all suspensions. One out of every eight Black secondary school student was suspended during the 1972-73 school year compared to one our of every sixteen White secondary student. These suspensions were the results of truancy and tardiness.[3]

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Marion Wright Edelman, "Winson and David Hudson's Dream," Harvard Educational Review 45 (November 1975): 436.

[3]Ibid.

In summary, the research findings indicate that the magnitude of absenteeism has become a matter of serious consideration for the nation's public school systems. More than a little evidence showed that school attendance, achievement and school progress are interrelated and interdependent. Many factors have been found to have profound effects on school attendance. They relate directly to the students' own personal and family life, socioeconomic status and home environment. School suspensions and grade reduction have been sanctioned by the courts in some school systems as strategies to curb absenteeism. These strategies proved to be ineffective, since it was difficult to determine whether a students' failure was directly related to absenteeism or some other factor. Suspensions were found to be ineffective because they gave students legal reasons for being out of school.

Career Maturity

The career maturity of the adolescent, according to Crites involves several aspects of vocational development which places emphasis on the affective and the cognitive domains. The affective domain focuses on feelings, the subjective reactions and the dispositions that the individual holds toward choosing a career and becoming a part of the world of work. The cognitive domain includes the evaluations of the adolescents' strengths, weaknesses, and knowledge of the world of work. When these two variables are combined, they form the essential behaviors

necessary for mature decision making in vocational choice.[1]

A substantial body of information has emerged to show that a child's career maturity is influenced by role models. In the area of vocational development, role models have been found to be extremely important, especially for females. According to Almquist and Angrist, mothers determine to a significant degree, the career choices of their daughters, that is, whether the daughters plan to have a traditional or a non-traditional career.[2] V.A. Harren et al. studied the work orientation of 1067 Black and White senior high school females in Louisville, Kentucky. It was found that females were influenced by their mothers' work. Both groups exhibited equal commitment to families, but because of differences in economic circumstances, Black females were 20 percent more likely to be expected to work after beginning their families than were White females.[3]

Studies by Blau, showed how fathers' occupational choices influenced their sons' career decision. The participants were 76,019 male freshmen entering 246 four year colleges and universities in the fall of 1961. The fathers' occupations were in engineering, medicine and teaching. The Strong Vocational

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[1]J. O. Crites, Career Maturity Inventory Administrators Manual.

[2]M. Almquist and S. S. Angrist, "Role Model Influence on College Women's Career Aspirations," Merrill-Palmer Quarterly 17 (1971): 263-279.

[3]V. A. Harren et al., "Influence of Sex Role Attitudes and Cognitive Styles on Career Decision-Making," Journal of Counseling Psychology 25 (1978): 390-398.

Interest Blank was used to describe types of "inherited" occupations. The study revealed that in every case, the sons chose the same occupations as their fathers.[1]

The information that was available to girls regarding occupations told them what they could and could not do, even in school. Jobs that carried a high degree of prestige were outside the home and were socially condemned for women.[2] A study by Helen Olive compared the social class status of male and female adolescents' vocational occupations. One hundred ninety-seven males and 237 females from three high schools in Central New Jersey were used in this study. Since this study was part of a larger research plan relating divergent thinking, achievement, and social class, the schools had to represent a cross-section of social class and general intelligence variables. The findings revealed that no significant difference in general intellectual abilities existed between those two large sampled groups of males and females. The females, on the whole, chose significantly higher class status occupations than did their male counterparts. When asked what they would like to do, rather than what they will do, the females surpassed the males in their potential for occupational prestige and status.

This group of females did not aspire, however, to positions

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[1]P. M. Blau, "Occupational Choice: A Conceptual Framework," Industrial and Labor Relations 9 (1956): 531-543.

[2]Women on Words and Images, Dick and Jane and Victims: Sex Stereotyping in Children's Readers (Princeton, New Jersey: Author, 1972).

like physicians, dentists, college presidents or upper levels of administration, which are ranked as the highest prestigious positions. They chose professions which included teaching and secretarial work. These positions, which require less education, offer less earning power and status. These fields are still typically acceptable as areas of occupations suited to women.[1]

Lunneborg investigated major aspects of career decision-making process for males and females. She reported no difference between male and female participants in their decision-making styles, in their progress through decision-making stages, in vocational self-concept crystallization, or in their reported vocational decisiveness. It was concluded that differential counseling exclusively on the terms of the sex of the client was inadvisable.[2]

Shappel, Hall and Tarrier investigated the relationship of sex and socioeconomic level to the perceptions of the world of work for 186 ninth grade students. The students were randomly selected from two different schools representing divergent socioeconomic levels. They found the occupational orientations of ninth grade students in low income areas were similar to the

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[1]Helen Olive, "Sex Difference in Adolescent Vocational Preferences," Vocational Guidance Quarterly 21 (March 1973): 199-201.

[2]P. W. Lunneborg, "Sex and Career Decision-Making Styles," Journal of Counseling Psychology 25 (1978): 211-305.

occupational orientations of ninth grade students in suburban settings. Males and females from the same socioeconomic environments exhibited few differences in occupational orientation. Divergent occupational patterns were observed between males in urban and males in suburban schools. When studies were made comparing the occupational orientations of females, the findings were similar to the males. The investigators concluded that the influence of the prevailing socioeconomic status had a greater influence on ninth graders' orientation to the world of work than gender membership.[1]

A study by Thomas investigated the effects of social class, race and sex on the work values of sixty randomly selected ninth grade students from a large urban area. The assessed values were both intrinsic as well as extrinsic to work. They included creativity, management, achievement, surroundings, supervisory relations, way of life, security, associates, esthetics, prestige, independence, variety, economic return, altruism, and intellectual stimulation. According to Hollingshead's Scale, the families were of low socioeconomic status. The findings revealed that Black females scores significantly lower than White females on the work scale.[2]

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[1]Dean L. Shappell, Lacy G. Hallm, and Randolph B. Tarrier, "Perceptions of the World of Work: Inner City Versus Suburbia," Journal of Counseling Psychology 18 (1971): 55-59.

[2]Hollie B. Thomas, "The Effects of Social Position, Race, and Sex on Work Values of Ninth Grade Students," Journal of Vocational Behavior 4 (1974): 357-364.

Herr and Enderlein found a significant relationship between high school curricula and career maturity. Their research with ninth grade students suggested that students enrolled in academic programs tend to have more occupational information than ninth grade students enrolled in vocational education. By the end of their senior year in high school, students enrolled in business education had almost reached the academic students who still held the lead; however, students enrolled in other curricula, continued to remain noticeably less career mature than either the academic or business education students. The research indicated that curricular content influenced career maturity.[1]

In a follow-up longitudinal study of 1,007 students who had formerly been studied by Herr and Enderlein; Herr et al used the adult form of the Career Development Inventory to investigate the relationship between the high school curriculum and personal characteristics while in school to post secondary educational and occupational patterns from ages twenty-four to twenty-seven. The data corroborated Herr and Enderlein's original findings. A significant relationship existed between career occupational information and academic programs. The data suggested that persons who completed a vocational curriculum in high school did not exhibit as much career maturity as did students enrolled in academic programs.[2]

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[1]Margery A. Neely, "Career Maturity Inventory Interpretations for Grade Nine Boys and Girls, " Vocational Guidance Quarterly 28 (December 1980): 116.

[2]E. A. Herr et al., Research on the effects on the Effects of

There appears to be general agreement among researchers that cultural factors could have potential impact on career maturity. Super maintained that cultural factors such as race and socioeconomic status could impact significantly on planning and problem solving.[1] This view was further substantiated by the research efforts of A. Roe et al.[2] Ansell and Hansen also produced a body of research which attested to the importance of socioeconomic variables. According to their findings, Black students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and white students from similar backgrounds did not differ in the area of planning and problem solving as indicated by their scores on the Readiness for Vocational Planning Scale.[3]

Within the past ten years, occupations such as physicians, architects and accountants, which have traditionally been associated with men, have become available to women. These professions demand higher salaries as well as more prestige. Nevertheless, there appears to be a pervasive lack of confidence among women regarding these non-traditional occupations.

Secondary School Curricular and Personal Characteristics upon Post Secondary Educational and Occupational Patterns, N.I.E. publication no. 80-0027 (Unversity Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 1981).

[1]D. E. Super, "Dimensions and Measurement of Vocational Maturity," Teacher College Record 57 (1955): 151-163.

[2]A. Roe and M. E. Siegleman, "Parent-Child Relations Questionnaire," Child Development 34 (1963): 355-369.

[3]E. M. Ansell and J. C. Hansen, "Patterns in Vocational Development of Urban Youth," Journal of Counseling Psychology 18 (1971): 505-508.

According to the 1981 U.S. Bureau of Census, the majority of women enter traditional professions, such as, teaching, librarianships and nursing.[1] Garrison studied gender differences as they impacted on the occupational aspirations of high school seniors. This longitudinal study began in 1970 and ended in 1976. An examination of three statewide surveys of high school students revealed that the gender gap was narrowing in regard to goal selection in professional occupations. The data further suggested that while male aspirations for professional occupations showed a decline, female aspirations for these occupations indicated a marked increase. Garrison found a decline in the percentage of females for sales-clerical jobs. It was concluded that, as male and female's orientations to the world of work became more similar, there would be a reduction in gender discrimination.[2]

Fottler and Bain investigated the career choices of 2,112 seniors from fourteen schools in Alabama. The average age was 17.4 years. When the goal selection of males and females were compared, it was found that approximately twice as many males (5-6 percent) as females (2.8 percent) preferred positions in management. Females tended to prefer professional and technical

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[1]U.S. Bureau of Census, Money, Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States, 1980, Current Population Reports Series Pubn. No. 127 (1981).

[2]H. H. Garrison, "Gender Differences in the Career Aspirations of Recent Cohorts of High School Seniors," Social Problems 27 ( ): 170-185.

to managerial positions. At lower levels of occupational aspirations, the study revealed that females aspired to traditional clerical and service positions and males aspired to be laborers or craftsmen. There were no observed statistically significant differences in the proportion of male and female aspirations for professional jobs and sales. The investigators concluded that: (1) when compared with earlier findings, the aspirations for managerial positions among students of all ages were low and declining, and (2) students continue to aspire to traditional gender oriented occupational roles.[1] It has been substantiated through research that the traditional roles of parents have been defined in such a manner that the fathers' role involves the economic functions; while the mothers' role relates to nurturing and homemaking.[2] As a consequence, girls are reinforced for performing domestic tasks, rather than for planning for professional careers. Patterson concludes that sex-role socialization can place restrictions on adolescent girls' career planning.[3]

A body of research by Dillard indicated that goal setting in Blacks related highly to economic factors, unemployment and job

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[1]M. D. Fottler and T. Bain, "Managerial Aspirations of High School Seniors: A Comparison of Males and Females," Journal of Vocational Behavior 16 (1980): 83-84.

[2]T. Parsons and R. F. Blaes, Family Socialization and Interaction Process (New York: Free Press, 1955), p. 75.

[3]L. E. Patterson, "Girls Careers Expressions of Identity," Voctional Guidance Quarterly 21 (1973): 268-275.

discrimination. In 1977, it was reported that unemployment for Black workers was 13.1 percent. During that year, the median family income for Blacks that year, however, was $9,563. Blacks often cited situational factors, such as job discrimination and unfair hiring and firing practices as deterrents to adequate socioeconomic status.[1] In a similar study, Becker and Krzystojiak studied discrimination in the labor market. Black students felt helpless against external forces over which they perceived themselves as having no control. Young Blacks whose parents experienced job discrimination exhibited twice as much apprehension and helplessness as against young Blacks whose parents acknowledged no job discrimination. Young Blacks whose parents reported instances of employment discrimination were negatively affected in terms of their goal setting behaviors.[2]

Until recently, girls' vocational preferences were based upon educated guesses, rather than empirical data. The nature of their preferences and the intricate interplay of variables which influenced them were virtually unexplored in literature. The paucity of scientifically based information made it impossible to accurately portray women's work patterns in relation to the reality of their work patterns.[3]

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[1]Hollie B. Thomas, "The Effects of Social Position, Race, and Sex on Work Values of Ninth Grade Students," Journal of Vocational Behavior 4 (1974): 357-364.

[2]J. M. Dillard, "Some Unique Career Behavior Characteristics of Blacks: Career Theories, Counseling Practice and Research," Journal of Employment Counseling 17 (1980): 288-298.

[3]B. E. Becker and F. J. Frzystojiak, "The Influence of Job

A study by Roe postulated that boys typically exhibited a connection between their interest patterns and abilities at an early age; whereas girls do not.[1] Fortner attempted to predict girls' vocational preferences on the basis of their intelligence test scores. Roe disagreed with Fortner's theory because of an overlap in intelligence levels at all levels of occupations.

Many studies lent credence to the concept that the central fact of every individual's life is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds for himself.[2] Self-concept is a construct which permeates every facet of human behavior, including career maturity. Pound investigated the self-concept of five hundred randomly selected male and female students in a large metropolitan city. They sought to predict career maturity as it related to race and sex. He used the Career Maturity Inventory and the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale(s) as predictors and found that self-concept seemed to impact on career maturity depending on racial and sexual membership. White males are strongly influenced by external forces when they evaluated self-concept. Black females were influenced by neither internal or external resources. They

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Discrimination on Locus of Control," Journal of Vocational Behavior 21 (1982): 60-70.

[1]B. Steffire, "Run Mama Run: Women Workers in Elementary Readers," Vocational Guidance Quarterly 18 (1969): 99-102.

[2]Wells and Marwell, Self-Esteem, p. 31.

related more closely to positive or negative feelings of self-concept. The study failed to mention the self-concept of Black males as it related to career maturity.[1]

In 1957, Super postulated that individuals seek to incorporate their self-concept by identifying themselves with an occupation that made statements about themselves. He further saw stabilization as an indication of the person's maturity.[2] Korman's study further investigated the consistency of the relationship between self-concept and behavior, his findings revealed that career preferences were motivated by their levels of self-esteem. People with high self-concept made career choices that reflected their feelings about themselves; while those with low levels of self-concept were influenced by social factors and peer pressure.[3]

A study by Leonard, Walsh and Osipow investigated the relationship between self-esteem in first vocational choices to second vocational choices. They hypothesized that: (a) persons with high self-esteem selected vocations that matched their personality styles with a higher degree of frequency than they chose vocations that were incompatible with their personality, and (b)

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[1]Edwin Herr and H. Cramer, Career Guidance and Counseling Through the Life Span (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), p. 153.

[2]D. E. Super, The Psychology of Careers (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), p. 27.

[3]A, K. Korman, "Self-Esteem as a Moderator of Relationship Between Self-Perceived Abilities and Vocational Choice," Journal of Applied Psychology 51 (1967): 65-67.

individuals with low ego-functioning made second vocational choices that were compatible as often as they made second choices that were incompatible.[1]

Bandura suggested that one's expectations produce certain behaviors which can lead to desired outcomes such as success in a vocation.[2] Typically, females have avoided traditional male jobs which include mathematics, science and other areas that involve analytical thinking and problem-solving. Although many women demonstrate competencies in these areas, in many instances, they appear to lack confidence in these alleged "masculine competencies." Female sex-role socialization toward the home and traditional vocations were studied by Betz and Hackett.[3] They found that males were equally confident in their performances in both traditional and non-traditional occupations; while females reported significantly lower levels of self-efficacy as it relates to non-traditional occupations. Thus, according to Fox and Cohn, many competent females enroll in clerical courses, rather than science or advanced mathematics which result in restricted career choices.[4]

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[1]W. Bruce Walsch, L. Leonard Russell, and Samuel H. Osipow, "Self-Esteem, Self-Consistency, and Second Vocational Choice," Journal of Counseling Psychology 20 (1979): 91-93.

[2]A. Bandura, "Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change," Psychological Review 84 (1977): 191-215.

[3]N. E. Betz and Hackett, "Relationship of Career-Related Self-Efficacy Expectations to Perceived Career Options in College Women and Men," Journal of Counseling Psychology 38 (1981): 399-410.

[4]L. H. Fox and S. J. Cohn, "Sex Differences in the

In summary, the related literature on career maturity described such variables as curricula, cultural factors, gender preferences, self-concept and parental influences and the interrelationship among them as they interfaced and combined to impact on career behavior in adolescents.

Parenting and Disruptive School Behavior

Disruptive school behavior is not a new phenomenon; however, within recent years conflict and violence have become problems of major concern in urban public schools throughout the nation. According to a 1976 report by the National Educational Association, public school children committed over one hundred murders, 12,000 armed robberies, 9,000 rapes, and 204,000 aggravated assaults against teachers and each other. In addition, American school children vandalized over $600,000,000 worth of property and were responsible for 270,000 school burglaries.[1]

The California State Department of Education announced that on the average two dozen teachers were assaulted every-day, and on the average 215 California children were assaulted each day, usually by children. A total of 17,145 students were assaulted between September 1, 1980 and January 31, 1981.[2] In 1983, the

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Development of Precocious Mathematical Talent" in Women and the Mathematical Mystique, eds. L. H. Fox, L. Brody and D. Tobin (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1980), pp. 94-111.

[1]National Education Reporter 15 (February 1976): 4.

[2]Charles C. Hardy, "Report Reveals Alarming Levels of Violence in States' Schools," San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle, 16 August 1981, p. 10.

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[1]National Education Reporter 15 (February 1976): 4.

[2]Charles C. Hardy, "Report Reveals Alarming Levels of Violence in States' Schools," San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle, 16 August 1981, p. 10.

social behavior may result from inappropriate parenting during some stage of the child's development. According to Sullivan, a psychiatrist, the person who assumes the "mothering" role has a significant influence on the child's behavior. If the "mothering" person is rejecting, it follows that the child's behavior will be negatively influenced, according to Sullivan.[1] This theory is borne out by findings of Heiburn, Harrell and Gillard. They concur that rejection experienced by the child by either parent will be linked to later life problems relative to personality impairment in both boys and girls.[2]

Inadequate parenting may manifest itself in a number of ways on the behavior of the child. According to Krucoff, children who are exposed to inadequate parenting may have learning problems. Boys with learning problems tend to act out their problems in recognizable ways; while girls respond in more subtle ways. Girls display "psychiatric symptoms" such as sadness and crying. A first grade girl's emotional health shows a direct relationship to her mother's mental health. Mothers who report feelings of depression and anxiety tend to have daughters whose behavior shows similar symptoms. The home environment plays a crucial role in the child's school adjustment.[3]

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[1]Harry Stack Sullivan, Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry (New York: Norton, 1953), p. 216.

[2]A. B. Heilbrum, S. N. Harrell, and B. J. Gillard, "Perceived Childbearing Attitudes of Fathers and Cognitive Control in Daughters," Journal of Genetic Psychology IIIK (1967): 29-38.

[3]Carol Krucoff, "Education: Grading Systems," The Wall Street Journal, 17 November 1982.

A child's perception of how significant others see him was investigated by Longstre and Rice through a comparison of high school non-agressive and underachieving boys. The study reveals that boys who perceive their parents as having high levels of love and control often identify with their parents; while aggressive boys who perceive their parents as having low levels of love and control, tend not to identify with them. Aggressive boys have a tendency to identify with their peers. The authors conclude that parents whose children depict them as being both loving and controlling, on the whole, have more instances of parent identification than do parents who are identified as being less loving and controlling.[1]

In American society, parenting functioning roles have been assigned. According to Parsons, the father is the "breadwinner" while the mother is the source of affection and nuturance.[2] Hoffman made a study of 445 children and found that boys who come from families where the mother is aggressive also exhibit hostile, aggressive behavior. On the other hand, in families where the father assumes the in-charge role, the boys appear to be more self-accepting and more accepting of others.[3]

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[1]L. E. Longstre and R. E. Rice, "Perceptions of Parental Behavior and Identification with Parents by Three Groups of Boys Differing in School Adjustment," Journal of Educational Psychology 55 (1964): 144-159.

[2]T. Parsons and R. F. Bales, Family Socialization and Interaction Process (New York: Free Press, 1955), p. 75.

[3]L. W. Hoffman, "The Fathers' Role in the Family and the Child's Peer Group Adjustment," Merrill-Palmer Quarterly of Behavior and Development 7 (1961): 97-105.

Mistreatment of children by their parents or guardians is a recognized social problem. Even though many cases are never reported, it is estimated that over 60,000 children are subjected to child abuse each year in the United States.[1] As a result of abuse, children suffer a variety of injuries, such as brain damage, paralysis, or physical deformity. Many children develop severe emotional problems.

Many parents or guardians who abuse children, were once abused themselves, so they are socialized into thinking that abuse is an acceptable way of treating a behavior problem. The child may be abused because he represents a hated person in the adult's life. Since the child is defenseless, it is easier for the abuser to take his frustrations out on the child, rather than the one for whom the violence is intended. In some instances, the abuser does not see the child as a helpless victim, but as a threatening symbol. Still other children are abused because the youngster does not meet all of the demands placed on him by the adult.

Child abuse in the form of physical punishment teaches the child that corporal, or cruel and inhumane treatment is an acceptable way of maintaining control and power.[2] Aggression breeds

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[1]National Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect, Working with Abusive Parents from a Psychiatric Point of View (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1978).

[2]Paul H. Mussen, John J. Conger, and Jerome Kaga, Child Development and Personality (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 543.

aggression. Small children, who are powerless to defend themselves against physical punishment are likely to become hostile, violent and aggressive. The school, for these children becomes a combat zone, where they can give vent to their pent-up hostile feelings.

The levels of aggression exhibited by a child are influenced by several factors: (1) the intensity of his hostile motivation, (2) the degree of environmental frustration experienced by the child, (3) the attention given to his aggression behavior, (4) observation and imitation of aggressive models, and (5) the amount of anxiety and guilt associated with the expression of aggression. According to findings by Vogel and Lauterbach, the kinds of controls' parents use will produce different effects on the social adjustment of the child. Adolescent boys with maladjusted behavior perceive their mothers as the accepting person and the father as the rejecting person. There is a tendency on the part of these mothers and their sons to unite against the fathers. These mothers tend to compete for their sons' affection. As a result, difficulties between fathers and sons are created.[1]

Even within the same family, mothers and fathers employ different disciplinary techniques with their children. A study by Ausubel noted three critical areas of parent/child interaction

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[1]W. Vogel and C. G. Lauterbach, "Relationships Between Normal and Disturbed Sons' Percepts of their Parents' Behavior, and Personality Attributes of the Prents and Sons," Journal of Clinical Psychology 19 (1963): 52-56.

patterns: (1) protectiveness, (2) dominance, and (3) appreciation. Ausubel recommends that parents use a careful blending of these three traits in order to maintain balance in the parent/child relationship. The overprotected child may be inclined to be dependent on his parents for making major decisions long after his youth. The ill-appreciated child may display a deficiency in self-confidence and low self-esteem; while the adolescent who is over-appreciated may appear to be unrealistic in interpersonal relationships and may take people for granted. The child who is over-dominated may tend to be alienated or ruthless; while the under-dominated adolescent may not know how to relate to others at all.[1]

Many studies were found that were critical of the parenting practices of Blacks. According to these authorities, Black parents tend to be too punitive in their disciplinary practices. A study by Peters contradicted these findings. Peters studied the disciplinary practices of Black working-class mothers. The results of this study show that Black mothers tend to adjust their disciplinary behaviors to the levels appropriate to the child's understanding. Black mothers teach their children the positive aspects of obedience and good conduct and instill in young people that those who respect their elders and behave well

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[1]David P. Ausubel, Theory and Problems of Adolescent Development (New York: Grune and Straton Co., 1954), p. 42.

will ultimately be happier and more successful.[1] Dollard and Davis made comparisons between the child-rearing practices of Black mothers and White mothers. According to their findings, Black mothers are less tolerant than White mothers in teaching their children. Black mothers are more likely than White mothers to use physical punishment in toilet training practices.[2] Radin and Kamii's study focused on the parent/child interaction patterns of Black mothers and White mothers. These authors suggest that Black mothers discourage risk-taking on the part of their children and tend to over-protect their children.[3]

Parenting approaches reflect the values, culture, race and socioeconomic status of each group. Since these factors differ for Black and White parents, child-rearing attitudes may vary accordingly.

In summary, violence and unruly acts in schools create an insidious social problem. Much important information has surfaced which link social adjustment in schools to parenting practices. Children's behavior reflects the values and codes of conduct of significant others in their lives. Aggressive acts against children have a cyclic effect. Children whose parents

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[1]Marie F. Peters, "Socialization in Black Families," in Black Families, ed. Harriett McAdoo (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1981), pp. 216-217.

[2]A. Davis and J. Dollard, Children of Bondage (New York: Harper and Row, 1940), p. 22.

[3]Norma Radin and Constance Kamii, "The Child-Rearing Attitudes of Disadvantaged Negro Mothers and Some Educational Implications," Journal of Negro Education 34 (1965): 138-146.

are aggressive, have also been found to become aggressive parents.

Characteristics of the Dropout

According to Good, dropout often designates an elementary or secondary pupil who has been in membership during the regular school term and who withdraws or is dropped from membership for any reason except death or transfer to another school before graduating from secondary school (grade 12) or before completing an equivalent program of studies. Such an individual is considered a dropout whether his dropping out occurs during or between regular school terms, whether it occurs before or after he has passed the compulsory school attendance requirement and when applicable, whether or not he has completed a minimum amount of work.[1] Although there can be no simple typecasting of all dropouts, there do exist attributes common to school dropouts which are easy to catalog. For example, it is virtually impossible to speak of a dropout without referring to attendance, since one of the identifying characteristics is poor attendance.[2]

The potential dropout displays an active dislike of school at a very early age. This dislike of school does not have to be

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[1] Dictionary of Education, 3rd ed. (1973).

[2] E. Hilton, "When Does Dropping Out Begin?" Instructor 82 (1972): 10.

verbally expressed, but the student frequently finds excuses to remain at, or to go home. The potential dropout has an obsessive concern with his health. When he does decide to come to school, he will frequently ask permission to leave school due to health related problems. Forged excuses with his parents' names on them may be used by the potential dropout to leave school for alleged medical appointments. This pattern of malingering increases from the elementary grades to middle and high school.

Socially, the dropout usually holds membership in a family of low socioeconomic status with an excessive number of children.[1] The educational attainment of the parents is generally around eighth grade level. It does not follow that the potential dropout comes from single-parent homes, but studies consistently show that high percentages of dropouts are products of single-parent families.

Academically, the dropout is over age for his grade level and tends to be one or more years below national norms in reading and mathematics scores.[2] According to scholastic aptitude standards, he is characterized as a slow learner. Generally, the dropout is enrolled in general or vocational educational programs. On the whole, it has been found that the potential

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[1]C. L. Lacy, "Identifying Potential High School Dropouts," School Counselor 16 (1968): 36-40.

[2]H. E. Walters and G. D. Kranzler, "Early Identification of the School Dropout," School Counselor 18 (1970): 97-104.

dropout displays little interest in curricular activities and even "less" interest in extracurricular activities. It is not uncommon for the potential dropout to have a history of disruptive school behavior accompanied by numerous suspensions.[1]

Walters and Kranzler collected data on ninth grade students. These students were placed into two groups - dropouts and persisters. The following categories were used to classify data: (1) grade point average, (2) reading, (3) arithmetic, (4) I.Q., (5) socioeconomic level, (6) participation in extracurricular activities, (7) retention, (8) days absent, and (9) age. Eleven combinations of variables emerged and they were used as predictors. Reading and I.Q. were included in seven of the eleven predictor combinations. Socioeconomic levels appeared in each of the eleven categories. Although "days absent" did not appear in the designated categories, the authors concluded that since there is a high correlation between socioeconomic factors and attendance, "days absent" could be included as a predictor for identifying potential dropouts.[2]

Chronologically, students enrolled in alternative schools are between sixteen and nineteen years old. According to

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[1]Boyd McCandless and Richard Coop, Adolescence: Behavior and Development (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), p. 338.

[2]Walters and Kranzler, "Early Identification of the School Dropout," p. 108.

Havinghurst, these are young adults. Late adolescence has been viewed as a period of intense frustration and rebelliousness. During this stage of development, the task assignment includes selecting a suitable marriage partner, making appropriate adjustments to living with a marriage partner, starting a family, rearing a family, managing a home, beginning adult work, becoming involved in civic activities and gaining membership in a social group.[1]

Vocationally, the dropout has been found lacking in a clear realization of the work world. Within recent years, technological advancements have made formal education a basic requirement for successful entry into the work force. Young people who drop out of school feel isolated, since they do not have appropriate career orientations. These young people often develop an emotional detachment from the entire work categories, and many are content to become life-long members of welfare systems or resort to crime to earn a living.

Physiologically, the late adolescent enrolled in alternative schools is no different from his counterparts in other educational settings. Puberty determines changes height, weight, body build, metabolism, blood pressure, and strength. Dropouts have a wide range of physical appearances. Size, height, weight, shape and skin color will vary widely from individual to individual.[2]

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[1]Havinghurst, Human Development and Education, pp. 162-165.

[2]Adams, Understanding Adolescence, p. 45.

In summary, dropouts share many common characteristics. Firstly, they are influenced by the educational attainments of their parents who generally have eighth grade educational levels. Secondly, their attendance patterns show early signs of premature withdrawal from school and thirdly, inadequate school attendance impedes progress through school; therefore, the dropout is usually one or more years below standard in reading and mathematics.

Evaluation of Alternative Education Programs

Within recent years, a growing number of metropolitan school districts throughout the country have established special programs and schools under the rubric "alternatives." However, there exists a lack of general consensus regarding alternative education. Much of the rancor over this concept focuses on its purposes and perspectives. Proponents of alternative education see it as a means of "saving" an otherwise weakening system of education which is failing to meet the needs of increasing numbers of disenchanted students. Supporters of alternative education further perceive this concept as a vehicle for providing a comprehensive range of educational options for young people who otherwise would be deprived of educational opportunities.

On the other hand, opponents view alternative education sites as "dumping grounds", "warehouses", or "compounds" for containing every possible conceivable type of social, disruptive, and acade-

mically incompetent misfit in the school-age population.[1] These schools bear a stigma and are perceived as the type of schools where nice and intelligent students do not attend.

Alternative schools have further been seen as contributing to the resegregation or isolation of students who hold membership in certain racial or ethnic groups.[2] According to Edelman, in many school districts across the country, alternatives relate highly to suspensions.[3] As non-white students populate formerly all-white schools, suspension rates increase. A study by Arnove and Strout lends support to Edelman's findings. The results of their study revealed that Chicago has four discipline schools for difficult students. The percentage of Blacks in two discipline schools for boys goes as high as 83 and 89 percent. In Dade County, Florida, where Black students make up only 29 percent of the population, they comprise 72 percent of students enrolled in alternative schools for disruptive students.[4] These schools have become enclaves for non-white students and

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[1]John W. Meyer, "The Charter: Conditions of Diffuse Socialization in School," in Social Processes and Social Structures, ed. W. R. Schoo (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970).

[2]Edelman, "Winson and David Hudson's Dream," p. 436.

[3]Marian Wright Edelman, School Suspensions: Are They Helping? (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Children's Defense Fund, 1975).

[4]Berkeley Unified School District Final Report: 1971-76 (Berkeley, California: BUSD, 1976), p. 69.

poor white students who do not fit into the white middle-class social mold.

Opponents show evidence that the twin phenomena of "creaming" and "dumping" predominate in alternative schools of large cities like Houston, Louisville, Minneapolis, St. Paul and Cincinnati. The "creaming" phenomenon refers to the process of setting up special programs for "gifted" and "talented" students; while the "dumping" phenomenon appears to be a prevailing method used by administrators and counselors for getting rid of disruptive students. Although, there is a body of literature which criticizes alternative schools for placing too much emphasis on the affective domain to the exclusion of the cognitive development of the student, the preponderance of the research gives evidence that alternative schools provide educational opportunities for students who otherwise would drop out of school.

For this study, the researcher will examine the subset of alternative schools which have demonstrated that alternative schools have the potential to enhance educational opportunities for students who do not succeed in traditional schools.

Alternative Schools and Attendance

Alternative schools are recognized for their students' commitment and good attendance. They have their most positive impact on the attendance of older students and on lower class students, on low achievers, and on students who are identified as

disruptors in traditional schools. According to findings presented by Musholt, a program at Harlem Middle School where teachers use the homeroom period to help students focus on social factors that either enhance or impede their emotional adjustment, truancy is significantly reduced.[1]

Stoker described, Help Overcome Learner Dropouts (HOLD) as a prescriptive counseling program for high school. Counselors met daily with students with attendance problems. The counselors gave the students daily progress report cards and the student took the card to each of his teachers. At the end of each class period, the teachers evaluated the students' academic and conduct performance. At the end of the day, the student took the card home for his parents to sign. By so doing, the parent was provided with a daily attendance and progress report. At the end of three weeks,a congratulatory letter was sent home to the parents. After six weeks, the students became responsible for monitoring their own attendance. Counselors made referrals to community agencies for students who had problems beyond the scope of the school. Seventy-two percent of the potential dropouts were still in school after three years. More than half of the chronic truants had no unexcused absences in the third year. A sixty-six percent gain in the number of credits was realized and an increase in self-esteem was also evident.[2]

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[1]Wayne Musholt, "Self-Concept and the Middle School," National Association of Secondary School Prinicpals Bulletin 58 (April 1974): 67-71.

[2]Joan Stoker, Grab HOLD: Help Overcome Learner Dropouts, a

A recent study of the Public Education Association revealed that alternative schools in New York City were providing quality education to former truants, dropouts and potential dropouts who collectively make up no more than half of New York City's high schools. Data collected on credit accumulation and attendance were compared to 25 percent of the entering students of eight alternative schools for the first semester of 1981 with similar data from their former high school records. This group of nearly three hundred students earned 60 percent more credit and decreased their absentee rate by nearly 40 percent. This pattern represented a significant improvement over their past academic and attendance practices.

An intensive study of High School Redirection, City-as-School and Satellite Academy High School for Career Education revealed a high correlation between attendance and achievement. As the students' attendance improved, so did their achievement.

These three schools represented a cross-section of student populations. Many students were over-aged functional illiterates who had dropped out of school. The High School Redirection curriculum combined basic education and internship related education to each student's particular needs and goals.

The researchers made extensive observations of classes,

Classroom Guidance Manual, Ed. 203-255, (Watsonville, California: Pajaro Valley Unified School District, 1980), p. 146.

interviewed at least 50 percent of the staff and 15 to 20 percent of the students on various aspects of the school environment at each of the three schools. Students felt that the caring atmosphere at the school, their teachers' attitudes toward them, and the educational programs made a difference in their school behavior. Ninety-six percent of the students felt their chances for graduation were enhanced as a result of their attending their respective alternative schools. Teachers, too, felt that the informal, less rigid setting created an environment conductive to learning and creative human interactions.[1]

Wilson reported findings from a practicum developed at Spaulding Junior High Unit I in Griffin, Georgia. The purpose of the practicum was to develop specific strategies that would help potential dropouts solve problems that contributed to their poor attendance pattern and lack of progress through school. In order to bring about careful identification of ninth graders who exhibited dropout tendencies, attendance and academic records were reviewed during July and August of 1975, previous to the opening of school. Special treatment was given to habitual truants. Even though their grade point averages were low, they were permitted to participate in extracurricular activities. It was found that students who had a stake in school tended to be moti-

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[1]Eileen Foley, "Alternative Schools: New Findings," Social Policy (Winter 1983): 85.

vated to attend school.

Beginning in 1971 and continuing through 1975, the dropout rate averaged 11.58 percent for the school. After the program was implemented, the academic performance of students consistently increased. As a result of the improvement in grades, students demonstrated an increased interest and motivation to remain in school. After the practicum, the dropout rate declined from 14.11 in the 1974-75 school year to 5.26.

The practicum effort produced additional good results. It helped foster good working relationships with community agencies. The Mental Health Service Center provided aid to students who required services beyond the scope of the school and the police department worked with students who were apprehended for various delinquent acts. The juvenile probation officers provided valuable day-to-day supervision for girls.

As improvements were attained in the cognitive area, changes were also evidenced in the affective domain. Student/teacher interactions were upgraded. The number of discipline cases referred to the administrator prior to the alternative education efforts was reduced from 60 percent to 40 percent. There have been no expulsions and one, two and three day suspensions have run only 30 percent of the total number of the preceding year.[1]

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[1]Joe C. Wilson, Spaulding Junior High School Unit I Dropout Prevention Program, April 1976.

This program clearly demonstrates that when students are given an opportunity to work to their full potential, they feel good about themselves. Self-concept impacts on the social behavior of young people.

Youths aged sixteen to nineteen from disadvantaged residential areas in New York City, who participated in the Youth Incentive Entitlement Project (YIEP) agreed to return to high school and complete their education. During the summer, students worked thirty hours a week and ten hours a week during the school year. The control group did not participate in the employment program. Heffez found that neither the grade point average nor the attendance of the YIEP group increased significantly. The control group declined in both attendance and academic achievement. Heffez concluded that employment alone was not the solution to the dropout problem.[1]

Davenport described a program that used the dynamics of group counseling to keep students in school. Fifty-one students whose cumulative records showed evidence of dropout potential were assigned to three teacher-facilitators (TF's). The classes met during the regular school day. Psychological terminology was avoided, since most students may be reluctant to be identified with anything that might indicate that they are abnormal. The TF's were supportive, rather than punitive in their attitudes and

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[1]Jack Heffez, "Employment and the High School Dropout," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin 64 (November 1980): 85-90.

behaviors toward the students. The students learned to have faith and confidence in the TF's and felt that their self-disclosures would be held in strict confidence. The students commented that the sessions helped them understand things about themselves, their families, and the school that they had not been aware of before.

An official record was kept of withdrawals from school. Only 15 percent of the forty students who came to the sessions withdrew from school and 5 percent were absent for more than half of a year. The data suggested that if students attended the special TF counseling sessions, their probability of remaining in school was high.[1]

Alternative Schools and Academic Achievement

During the past twenty years, an increasing body of research has concentrated on identifying characteristics that enhance academic achievement. Educational researchers make a strong suggestion that alternative schools can make a difference. Alternative schools, if properly operated, can contribute to the enhancement of academic achievement of high risk students.

The amount of resources is important. But more importantly, however, is the organization and efficient use of all available resources. More specifically, the degree to which teachers and

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[1]Joy Davenport et al., "Group Counseling with Potential High School Dropouts," Personnel and Guidance Journal 56 (April 1978): 510-512.

students take advantage of the available time for instructional activities and the degree to which teachers are able to motivate their students and reinforce their efforts are more important than the amount of resources.

Research related to alternative schools result in six factors which account for differences in student achievement. They are: (1) strong administrative support in regard to instructional matters, (2) an orderly and safe school environment which is free of discipline and vandalism problems, (3) a strong emphasis on basic skills and a belief that all students regardless of their racial of socioeconomic membership can reach high levels of achievement which is based on instructional objectives, and (4) strong attempts to administer to both the cognitive and affective needs of students.

Johnston and Parker identified a successful alternative program which supports the concept that alternative programs can make a difference in academic achievement. The Walden III Plan was begun in Racine, Wisconsin during the 1972-73 school year with an enrollment of 155 eleventh and twelfth grade students. The enrollment reached 230 during the 1973-74 and 1974-75 school year. Enrollment was open to any student who lives in the district on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Students are free to participate in decisions regarding curriculum and school policy. Community resources are also used for learning experiences. There is an emphasis on personal

choice, freedom and responsibility. Attempts are made to teach the "whole" child by placing emphasis on both cognitive and affective dimensions.

The 1973-74 evaluation represented a cross-section of socioeconomic levels, except for Black students whose presence in percentages did not equal to district averages. This situation was corrected during the 1974-75 school year. Students involved in the first evaluation were classified according to race, sex and grade level. There were 145 Whites, four Blacks and six Chicanos. Eighty-two females and seventy-three males constituted the group. The grade levels were eighty-eight seniors and sixty-seven juniors.

According to the Hollingshead Index, the groups held middle and lower middle class memberships. The mean IQ was 106. The groups' grade point average was 2.15 on a four-point scale. The Iowa Test of Basic Development (ITED) was used to measure academic achievement. There was a significant gain between pre-test and post-test scores for the eleventh graders. The gain in reading was especially significant. The twelfth graders performed far above expected gain scores.

The authors feel that teacher expectations influenced the reading performance. Students are expected to read well; therefore, they perform in accordance to their teachers' expectations. They further maintain that the open and informal schedule allows time for reading, which students in a traditional setting would

not have.[1]

A study by Thurber reported similar findings for a high school in Torrington, Wyoming. Five hundred enrollees had been classified as "high risk" ninth and tenth grade students. Title IV Project Impact was comprised of four components: (1) the academic program of English, mathematics, science and social studies, (2) the teacher/student ratio was ten to one, (3) a student service room was staffed by a social worker, who worked with students upon request, and (4) a counselor trained peer counselors to help their fellow schoolmates. A three day in-service program was held to help all involved persons learned strategies that would enable them to work effectively with students.

As a result of this program, students passed 97 percent of their classes as compared to 55 percent the preceding year. The dropout rate declined for ninth grade students from 7.1 percent to 2.4 percent. The students expressed more positive attitudes toward school.[2]

According to Dauw, an assessment of the Individualized Instruction Program (IIP), a dropout prevention program in Pontiac, Michigan showed evidence of improvement in attendance, achievement, self-concept and student behavior. Thirty-six stu-

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[1]David L. Johnston and Jackson V. Parker, "Walden III: An Alternative School Survives Evaluation Quite Nicely, Thank You," Phi Delta Kappa 56 (May 1975): 624-627.

[2]Mike Thurber, "Project Impact: Dealing with High Risk Students," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin 65 (April 1981): 103.

dents from a regular high school were selected and matched with a sample from the individualized instruction program. At the end of the study, the average reading comprehension score for grade placement was 8.7 percent for the regular group. The dropout rate for the IIP students was 14.9 percent; while the dropout rate for the regular school participants was 17.1 percent. Teachers and students cited individualized instruction, a comfortable setting, a congenial environment, pupil/teacher ratio, small group discussions and student participation as being responsible for these significant gains.[1]

Alternative Schools and School Behavior

In the 1950's, James B. Contant described the problems of urban youth as "social dynamite." Thirty years later, that same description may be used to refer to disruptive behavior in today's schools. Administrators across the country seek effective means of "defusing" this dynamite. Alternative schools appear to help students turn the psychological corner by helping them assume more responsibility for themselves and others. CONTACT, an alternative program, used parental assistance in the development of a program for students with behavior problems.

Erickson described a dropout prevention program which sent family assistants from the community into the homes of students

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[1]Edward G. Dauw, "Separate Schools for Potential Dropouts," Educational Leadership Research Supplement 5 (January 1972): 333-340.

whose behavior demonstrated serious problems with truancy, achievement and anti-social behavior. During home visitations, parents were taught what to expect from the schools and how they could help their children improve their attendance patterns. The result was a reduction of class truancy by 19 percent. Eighty-seven percent of the original students remained in school. Approximately 70 percent of the parents interviewed stated that they had observed differences in their children's attitudes toward teachers, other students and school. The students corroborated their parents' responses, They, too, felt that the program had encouraged them to improve their school behavior. Erickson noted that the program was not a panacea since only 33 percent of the students showed a decrease in their failure rates; while 66 percent made no improvement at all, or did worse.[1]

According to Hakanen, the STRIDE Program (Students and Teachers Interested in Dropout Education), an alternative education plan which was implemented in Rockford, Illinois has helped save dropouts. The purpose of the program was to motivate potential dropouts to return to school, achieve academic success, acquire positive self-images and attend school voluntarily. The target population was fifteen to twenty students who showed dropout tendencies. The program was rehabilitative in nature so that students could be returned to regular classes at the end of the

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[1]Edsel Erickson, Final Report of the Evaluation of the 1970-71 School: Home Contact Program, New York State Urban Education.

semester. The students earned credit toward graduation and athletic eligibility. The students studied basic subjects in a self-contained class and the remainder of the day was spent on a job site outside the school.

There was a decrease in school violations and the attitudes of the students toward school improved. The self-concept of the students also improved. The self-concept of the students also improved. Hakanen credited the attitude of the teachers to the success of the program. An evaluation of the program revealed that the students liked the program because it helped them meet graduation requirements.[1]

Alternative Schools and Career Maturity

There are many ways in which individuals define themselves. The Self-concept is uniquely expressed in terms of one's vocational choice. Work and vocation prepare the stage and make up the integrating forces in determining how one lives, where one lives, his circle of associates and his level of intellectual and physical capacity. Many young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds hold negative self-images. Their low self-profiles may result from negligent parental support, hostile environmental forces, inadequate orientation to the world of work while in

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[1]Lauir John Hakanen, "The Stride Program an Answer to Absenteeism," Phi Delta Kappa 59 (January 1978): 348-349.

school, insufficient role models, or a host of other known and unknown reasons. These young people frequently drop out of school.

Schreiber appropriately sums up the condition of the dropout in Profile of School Dropouts:

> The failure to secure and hold a job is a severe blow to anyone; the blow is more severe to the dropout, the school failure, to alienated youth. When he was in school, he learned that he was good at nothing. Now he is told in no uncertain terms that he is good for nothing.[1]

According to 1983 statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, young Blacks between the ages of sixteen and nineteen have high rates of unemployment.[2] Rampant unemployment can have an insidious effect on the individual as well as on society. The frustration incumbent in unemployment can result in crime and racial turbulence.

The programs described below demonstrate that students enrolled in alternative schools get adequate exposure to the world of work.

Dean examined a school-within-a-school program designed to save dropouts in Paducah, Kentucky. The program was divided into three levels. Level I was geared to meeting the needs of stu-

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[1]Daniel Schreiber, Profile of School Dropouts (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 85.

[2]Lawrence B. Schiamberg, Human Development (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1985), p. 430.

dents who planned on entering the job market during or after graduation. Level II was set up to serve students who were college-bound and Level III was implemented to provide basic skill offerings for students who had severe academic deficits. The subjects were appropriate to the ability levels of the students. The staff members worked closely with each other as well as with the students. Not only was there a significant decrease in dropout rates, but student failure also declined markedly. Prior to the program, 32 percent of the students failed in English and social studies as opposed to 42 percent before the program was implemented. The dropout rate was recorded at less than 5 percent after the program started; whereas prior to the program, the dropout rate was 28 percent. Morale among the students improved and low-achieving students took an interest in the functioning of the school.[1]

The Continuing Education Center (CEC) in Phoenix Union High School in Arizona was begun to hold potential dropouts in school, according to Klein. A curriculum combined basic skills, career awareness and vocational opportunities to make the curriculum meaningful to the students. Counselors spent 20 percent of their time working with teachers, sensitizing them to the needs of the students. A standardized test was administered to the students

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[1]Kenny S. Dean, "A Plan to Save Dropouts: School-Within-A-School," The Clearing House 48 (October 1973): 98-99.

and the program was individualized for skill and level placement. A conference was scheduled and a contract was drawn up between the student and his teacher so mutually agreed upon goals, codes of behavior and class expectations could be defined. The results indicated that 69 percent of the students received credit in at least 75 percent of their courses. The dropout rate had declined markedly.[1]

Gibboney and Langsdorf investigated a program developed by Opportunities Industrialization Corporation of America in Philadelphia. The Career Intern Program (CIP) was an alternative school designed to provide educational opportunities for potential high school dropouts or dropouts who wanted to complete high school, plan a career, and improve basic mathematics and reading skills. The program had three components. Component I was designed to improve the students' career opportunities. Component II provided "hands on" job experiences that combined academic and career information. Component III focused on the change over from school to work to further education. Even though standardized test results showed that 58 percent of the students were reading at or below seventh grade level, between January 1974 and September 1975, 67 percent of the students had either graduated or were attending school.[2]

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[1]William P. Klein, "The Continuing Education Center: An Alternative that is Working," High School Journal 61 (December 1977): 111-118.

[2]Richard A. Gibboney and Michael G. Langsdorf, "The Career Intern Program: an Experiment in Career Education that Worked," Journal of Research and Development in Education 12 (Spring

In summary, according to research finding, the needs of a significant number of school-age youths are not being met in traditional school settings. Alternative schools provide a learning situation which is based on the needs and learning styles of young people which enables them to remain in school and experience academic success. Individualized and personalized instruction encourage students to evaluate their decisions and make responsible alternatives that will enhance their educational attainment. Many students flourish in a relaxed environment which is custom-designed for them. Thus, significant educational and psychological dimensions are achieved.

1979): 103-105.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Information pertinent to this study will be categorized according to research designs participants, selection procedures, and procedural steps.

Research Design

The ex post facto research design was employed in this study. This design permitted the investigator to compare the differences between alternative school students and traditional school students on selected psychological and educational variables. For this study, the independent variables (non-manipulated) was the educational experiences of the participants. The dependent variables (observed) will be the measures of academic achievement, academic performance, attendance, career maturity, and disruptive behavior.

According to Ary et al., the ex post facto design is a quasi experimental design which permits the researcher to compare two groups on all relevant characteristics except one. The researcher attempts to relate the dependent variable Y to variations in the independent variable X which have previously been determined in the natural order of events.

The ex post facto design is useful because it is frequently

the only method available to research which lends itself to the investigation of such attributes as creativity, brain damage, intelligence, early experiences, and socioeconomic status.[1] Since these variables have already taken place, they defy manipulation; therefore, must be studied after-the-fact or in retrospect for their effect on observed dependent variables. It is advisable for researchers to exercise caution when interpreting ex post facto results, since the possibility of spurious relationships comes built-in this design.

EX POST FACTO RESEARCH DESIGN

Group	Pre-Test	Treatment	Post-Test
E	BSAP CMI GPA	(X)	BSAP CMI GPA
C	BSAP CMI GPA	____	BSAP CMI GPA

Participants

The participants were eighty (80) ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools. The eighty students will be randomly selected and

[1]Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, Introduction to Research in Education, pp. 298-320.

equally divided between the alternative and traditional schools respectively.

Selection Procedures

From a pool of sixty students (the total enrollment in the alternative program), thirty-five (35) ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders were randomly selected. An additional ten alternatives were randomly selected to allow for attrition. From a pool of approximately 2200 students (the approximate number of ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students enrolled in the traditional school), thirty five students were randomly selected. An additional ten alternates were randomly selected to allow for attrition.

Setting

Sixty-Eight Street Alternative School has been in existence for six years. The total school enrollment consists of 240 over-aged racially mixed ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade students who are dropouts, pushouts, truants, or behavioral problems in traditional schools. According to statistical data for Chapter I, indigency applications for free books and free or reduced lunch, the students come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

The staff consists of a principal whose office is located downtown Milwaukee, an in-building administrator, sixteen

teachers, two vocational counselors, two teacher/counselors and the service of a psychologist, social worker, speech pathologist and a multi-disciplinary team coordinator on itinerant bases.

Basic curricular courses in English, mathematics, reading and social science are offered. Students who wish to complete course requirements for graduation may go to a neighboring alternative school for science courses. The schedule is flexible and personal; while the atmosphere is open, free and informal. Personal choice, freedom and responsibility are stressed. These attributes promote affective as well as intellective outcomes.

Community resources are also used for learning experiences. Vocational counselors work closely with community businessmen who are willing to train and employ students. Some students serve as volunteers in homes for the elderly, day care centers for preschool children, elementary school playgrounds and other community-based service centers. These responsibilities provide opportunities for young people to direct their talents, powers and capabilities in positive directions. By devoting their time and energy to others, they gain a positive self-identification which makes them feel significant and worthwhile to themselves as well as to others. Young people who were in many instances, menaces to society are now making worthwhile contributions to their communities.

The traditional school has features found in high schools across the country. It has a full complement of curricular

offerings along with a variety of extracurricular activities. Vincent High School has a total school population of 1400 students. The staff is made up of a principal, four assistant principals, over 100 teachers, 4 counselors, a full-time psychologist, and a part-time social worker.

The curricular courses are broadly based and students can enroll in either an academic, vocational, or business education program. Vocational counselors also seek the cooperation of business establishments that will provide on-the-job training for students.

Students who attend both schools are bused from all areas of the city, collectively they represent a cross-section of cultural, racial, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds. The schools' records indicate that parent involvement and participation are minimal. Both schools are located on the northwest side of Milwaukee. Historically, this area has been predominately a White middle class area. Within recent years, however, Black upwardly mobile families have become residents.

Instruments

The instruments to be used in this study include the following: (1) Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP), (2) How I See Myself Scale, and (3) Career Maturity Inventory (CMI).

The Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP) was developed during the fall of 1976 through the combined efforts of a nation-

wide consortium of school districts and the Educational Testing Service (ETS).[1] Twenty-five consortium members from school districts throughout the nation were selected by ETS to serve as the Basic Skills Assessment Steering Committee which provides the policy direction for the BSAP activities.

The BSAP, a national secondary-level testing program, assesses areas of reading. writing and mathematics. The primary purpose of the testing program is to identify eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students who have profound deficiencies in basic skills early enough so that school districts can provide the kinds of instructional programs that will enable students to achieve on the levels required for high school entrance and high school exit. In order to graduate from high school, students are required to meet minimal proficiency or competency standards. These tests may also be used with advanced younger students and with adults. The content areas require common sense applications of practical and academic skills.

The tests for reading, writing and mathematics were written and reviewed by ETS subject matter specialists. Approximately 500 students in grades eighth, ninth, and twelfth from schools across the country took the pre-test. These students were randomly selected to represent a cross-section of academic ability, socio-economic status and ethnicity.

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[1]Educational Testing Service, Basic Skills Assessment Program Technical Manual (Menio Park, California: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1978). p. 1.

The first pre-test results were statistically analyzed and reviewed by ETS staff members and members of the Test Development Committees. In order to insure as close a match as possible, a second pre-test, which consisted of revised items from the first pre-test along with new items, was developed for the final set of questions. All three tests, reading, writing and mathematics, were developed by this procedure.

Since the primary purpose of the BSAP is to identify students who are deficient in the standard skills, the tests are at a level of difficulty that efficiently discriminates between students who have academic deficiencies and students who do not have such deficiencies. On the whole, reading and writing skills tests are somewhat easy for the general school-age population; while the mathematics tests are designed to be more challenging. The tests have reliabilities of .90 which correspond with the expected decision based on test scores.

As part of the norming process, members of the ETS were requested to identify students whom they considered deficient in basic skills. The members participating in the norming process were given a document entitled Basic Skills Assessment Program Standards Setting/Validation. This document explained the need for test validation and asked the teachers to place each student involved in the norming process in one of three categories for each of the three tests:

1. Definitely does not require help in mastering the skills measured by the test.

2. Not certain if the student requires remedial help or not.

3. Definitely requires remedial help in mastering the skills measured by the tests.

The results of the study gave evidence to support the validity of the BSAP for the identification of students who are deficient in reading, writing, and mathematics.

The How I See Myself Scale by Ira Gordon consists of forty-two items which assesses particular factors relative to the respondents' academic and self-concept levels. According to the author, the instrument is not designed to cover the totality of self-concept; however it is an excellent instrument for the evaluation of programs designed to improve certain aspects of self-concept and academic variables.

The How I See Myself Scale is a research tool and as such, it is not intended for individual classification or diagnosis. It is important for the user to be thoroughly familiar with the manual regarding the use of the instrument and the interpretation of the results.

Reliability was established on a group of eighty high school students in 1965 on a test-retest basis. The test-retest reliability coefficients were very high within a time interval of approximately two weeks. After a portion of Yeatt's sample took

the scale nine days after the first administration, it was concluded that the grade level of a child does not influence the test-retest reliability.

Thirty-four disadvantaged mothers participated in another test-retest situation with the retest taking place after a two week interval. Again, there was a high correlation between the scores of the two administrations which suggests that the instrument is consistent across populations, age levels, grades and socioeconomic factors.

The content validity of the How I See Myself Scale is based on the responses by children to open-ended questions about themselves, their attitudes toward their teachers, school, emotions, physical appearances and their peers. According to the author, there exist three aspects of the global self-concept: self as inferred from observed behavior, self as inferred from projective techniques, and the self as revealed by self-reports. As with other self-reports, the How I See Myself Scale depends on the honesty and memory of the respondents. In this area, the instrument has received some criticism because the respondents might seize the opportunity to over-amplify themselves. Except for the area for autonomy, where the respondents generally rate themselves at mid-point, they usually rate themselves slightly above mid-point on other factors. It would appear, then, that inflated scores on the scale would not pose major problems.

The How I See Myself Scale correlates significantly with

developmental theories related to self-concept. The variables of Physical Appearance and Interpersonal Adequacy support the socialization processes of adolescents as contended by developmentalists.

Gordon states in the manual, "The scale is recommended for use at this time for either descriptive, or research study of groups, rather than for individual diagnosis."[1] Thus, if used for the purposes for which the scale is designed, the How I See Myself Scale, is a helpful tool for the evaluation of certain factors related to academic potential and self-concept.

The Career Maturity Inventory (CMI), formerly entitled the Vocational Development Inventory (VDI) was developed by John O. Crites. The first data for the CMI were collected in the fall of 1961, when preliminary forms of the Attitude Scale were administered to 2000 students enrolled in a senior high school in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The overall instrument is called an "inventory" because this title appears to encompass the substance and formal characteristics of both cognitive and affective domains as exemplified by the Competency Test and the Attitude Scale respectively.

The CMI consists of a fifty item Attitude Scale and a Competence Test which contains five subtests of twenty items each. The attitudes, competencies, consistencies and realism of

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[1] I . J. Grodon, The Test manual for the How I see Myself Scale (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Educational Research and Development Council, 1968).

career choices are conceptualized and compose a comprehensive model or construct, namely career maturity in adolescents.

The Competency Test which consists of five subtests of skills and knowledge, are derived from Super's Career Model and designed to measure the following career choice competencies: (1) Knowing Yourself or Self-Appraisal, (2) Knowing About Jobs, or Occupational Information, (3) Choosing A Job, or Goal Selection, (4) Looking Ahead, or Planning and (5) What Should I Do?, or Problem Solving.

A central concept in career development is that one's choice of an occupation complements his "self-concept." The individual's perceptions of his attitudes, interests and personality characteristics impact on career maturity. The more career mature individuals will have thought about their vocational assets and liabilities; therefore, will have greater self-knowledge.

Reliability data on test-retest stabilities are being collected, so only internal consistency coefficients are available at this time. The Kudar-Richardson Formula-20 values were calculated for the research edition for each grade level in the 1972 sample (N's raged from 120 to 475). The findings indicate that most of the coefficients are acceptably high across grades. They range from .72 to .90, with only two exceptions. The two low coefficients are for the Problem-Solving subtests in grades six and seven. The causal factors for the two low coef-

ficients are not known; however, Crites, Becktoldt, Goldstein and Heilbrum theorize that since students in the upper elementary grades have not firmed up a consistent and integrative pattern of copying strategies, they may solve problems different ways at different times; thereby, reducing the internal consistency of the subtest.

Since the K-R 20's indicate that all five parts of the Competency Test are relatively homogeneous sets of items, it may be concluded that within a subtest the items measure basically the same variable.

The Attitude Scale brings out the feelings, subjective reactions, the dispositions that the individual has toward choosing a career and getting established in the world of work. The four attitudinal variables are: (1) Decisiveness in Career Decision Making, (2) Involvement Career Decision Making, (3) Orientation to Career Decision Making, and (4) Compromise in Career Decision Making.

Reliability items were based on Super's theory and from counseling practice if they showed incremental relationship with grade level. Kudar-Richardson-20 coefficients are reported for grades sixth through twelfth. The highest coefficient .84 is reported for the sixth grade; while the lowest is .65 for the ninth grade. According to Crites, the coefficients are as expected, since the scale was formed from five conceptual clusters. One stability coefficient of .71 is reported for a

large sample of students in grades sixth through twelfth over a one year interval. This figure appears to be relatively low for an attitude variable; however, Crites maintains that maturation in career development is not uniform, but happens in short spurts and starts. Therefore, when consideration is given to maturational variance, the measurement of career choice attitudes in the attitude scale is almost as reliable as measurements of single traits with aptitude tests.[1]

Procedural Steps

Before implementing this study, it was necessary to complete the following steps:

1. Obtained authorization from Milwaukee Public Schools Division of Planning and Long-Range Development Department of Educational Research and Program Assessment.
2. Secured permission from the principals of both schools to carry out the study in their buildings.
3. Obtained informed consent from the parents/guardians of selected students in the samples.
4. Obtained informed consent from the selected students.
5. Randomly selected fifty students from each school.
6. Secured the cooperation of two attendance secretaries as aides to assist with the data collection.

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[1] D. E. Super and J. O. Carites, Appraising Vocational Fitness, revised ed. (New York: Harper, 1962), p. 83.

7. Conducted pre-group information orientation sessions regarding the purpose, frequency, place of meetings, ground rules, duration and size. Answer questions that the potential participants might ask regarding the project.

8. Administered post-tests to both groups.

9. Kept a record of all activities.

10. Analyzed data collected from all sources and incorporate into final dissertations.

Analysis of Data

The data for this study was collected, statistically treated and presented in the manner described below:

Collection of Data

1. First semester grade point averages for the eighty students participating in the study were collected from The Information Systems Office of the alternative school and the traditional school.

2. Data relative to attendance and disciplinary referrals for the eighty students participating in the study were collected from the office of the grade level administrators for both schools.

3. Collected data from Basic Skills Assessment Program for the second semester of the 1984-1985 from grade level counselors from both schools.

4. Collected and analyzed and from BSAP, CMI, and the How I See Myself Scale(s).

Statistical Treatment

A one-way analysis of variance will be applied to null hypotheses 2, and 4. If the resulting F-ratio is significant at

the predetermined significance level (alpha = .05), the researcher will reject the null hypotheses and conclude that significant differences exist among the sample means. For null hypotheses 1, 3 and 5, chi square will be applied. If the differences between the observed and expected frequencies are significantly different, the null hypotheses will be rejected and the researcher will conclude that the frequency differences did not occur merely by chance.

The data will be arrayed as shown in the following table.

TABLE I

Hypotheses 1, 3, 5

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	--	--	--	--
Within Groups	--	--	--	--

Hypotheses 2, 4

Group	Pre-Test Mean	Pre-Test SD	Post-Test Mean	Post-Test SD	Mean Dif.	df	Chi-Square
Alternative School N=40	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Traditional School	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This chapter includes the presentation of results and analyses of the findings of this study. Five null hypotheses were tested to determine the effects of an alternative educational program on the academic achievement, academic performance, attendance, career maturity and disruptive behavior of high school students. The following presentation is a statistical analysis of the data obtained from this study.

Academic Achievement

Data were obtained to test the hypothesis listed below:

1. H_o: There will be no statistically significant difference between the mean levels of self-concept and academic achievement of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

Table 2 contains information about students' academic achievement.

TABLE II

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ALTERNATIVE AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

Statistics

Type of School	df	M	S.D.	SEM	DIFF.	SED,FF 3EDM	t
Alternative	35	2.589	1.303	.171			
Traditional	35	2.563	1.609	.261	.026	.369	.070

The analysis of the data in Table 2 revealed no statistically significant difference between the mean levels of academic achievement of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools; therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 3 contains information about students' self-concepts.

TABLE III

SELF-CONCEPT (TEACHER/SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS) OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ALTERNATIVE AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

Statistics

Type of School	df	M	6	6M	DIFF.	6dm	t
Alternative	35	14.750	3.183	.583			
Traditional	35	14.971	15.582	1.635	-.221	1.721	.128

No statistically significant difference was found between the mean levels of self-concept (teacher/school relationships) of

students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools. consequently, hypothesis number six was accepted.

Table 4 contains information about the students' academic performance.

Academic Performance

2. H_o: Data were obtained to test the hypothesis that: there will be no statistically significant difference between the mean levels of academic performance of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

The results of the statistical analysis with reference to the academic performance of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools are presented in Table 4.

TABLE IV

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ALTERNATIVE AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

Statistics

Type of School	df	M	S.D.	SEM	DIFF.	SED, SEDM	t
Alternative	35	1.605	.993	.160			
Traditional	35	1.520	1.726	.276	.085	.319	.266

The mean grade equivalent scores of alternative school students in mathematics and English were not statistically different from the traditional school students at the .05 level; therefore, null hypothesis 3 was accepted.

Attendance

3. H_o: There will be no statistically significant difference between the mean levels of the attendance patterns of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

Table 5 contains information about the students' attendance patterns.

TABLE V

ATTENDANCE PATTERNS OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ALTERNATIVE AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

Statistics

Type of School	df	M	SD	SEM	DIFF.	SED,FF	t
Alternative	35	15.147	11.095	1.902	1,753	3.558	
Traditional	35	16.900	17.533	3.831	1.753	4.133	4.93

Hypothesis 3 was concerned with the attendance patterns of students enrolled in the alternative and traditional schools. Chi square was used to determine the level of significance between alternative and traditional schools on the criterion variable.

The obtained value did not meet the decision rule (alpha = .05); therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. According to the findings of this study, attendance at the alternative school was not statistically significantly different from attendance at the traditional school.

Career Maturity

4. H_o: Data were obtained to test the hypothesis that: there will be no statistically significant difference between the mean levels of career maturity of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

Table 6 contains information about the students' knowledge about themselves.

TABLE VI

CAREER MATURITY (KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SELF) OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ALTERNATIVE AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

Statistics

Type of School	df	M	6	M	DIFF.	6dm	t
Alternative	35	10.750	3.904	.660			
Traditional	35	9.395	2,295	.786	1.355	1.026	1.321

Hypothesis number four was concerned with the effects of an alternative school program on the career maturity of high school students. A review of the literature indicated an increase in the career maturity of students enrolled in alternative schools.[1]

The findings of this study, however, revealed no statistically significant differences between the mean levels of career maturity (knowledge about self) of students enrolled in alter-

[1]Kenny S. Dean, "A Plan to Save Dropouts: A School within a School," Clearing House 48 (October, 1973): 98-99.

native and traditional schools.

Table 7 contains information about students' knowledge about jobs.

TABLE VII

CAREER MATURITY (KNOWLEDGE ABOUT JOBS OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ALTERNATIVE AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

Statistics

Type of School	df	M	SID	M BEM	DIFF.	SEdm	t
Alternative	35	10.250	5.280	.892			
Traditional	35	11.289	11.990	1.471	-1.039	1.720	-1.604

The mean score for high school students enrolled in the alternative school in the area of career maturity (knowledge about jobs) was not statistically significantly different from high school students enrolled in traditional schools.

Table 8 contains information about students' knowledge about choosing a job.

TABLE VIII

CAREER MATURITY (CHOOSING A JOB) OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ALTERNATIVE AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

Statistics

Type of School	df	M	6	6M	DIFF.	6dm	t
Alternative	35	8.194	-4.332	.732			
Traditional	35	8.789	9.674	1.590	-.595	1.750	-.340

No statistically significant difference was found between the mean levels of career maturity (Choosing A Job) of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools; therefore, null hypothesis number four was accepted.

Disruptive Behavior

5. H_O: Data were obtained to test the hypothesis that: there will be no statistically significant difference between the mean levels of disruptive behavior of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

Table 9 contains information about the students' disruptive behavior in schools.

TABLE IX

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR OF STUDENTS
ENROLLED IN ALTERNATIVE AND TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

Statistics

Type of School	df	M	SEM		DIFF.	SEdm	t
Alternative	35	.861	1.344	.224			
Traditional	35	.850	1.775	.282	.011	.360	.033

The disruptive behavior of students enrolled in the alternative school did not differ statistically significantly from the disruptive behavior of students enrolled in the traditional school. Because the obtained value did not meet the decision rule (lpha = .05), the null hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion

The findings of this study are discussed in this section as they relate to the literature. The results are cited and reference is made to the noted statistical results.

Five null hypotheses were tested and the alpha = .05 level of confidence was used as the decision rule. When subjected to statistical analyses, none of the hypotheses yielded statistically significant differences.

Hypothesis one was concerned with the effects of the self-concept on academic achievement. Many studies have been con-

ducted and the results revealed a close relationship between these two variables. According to Coopersmith, the level of academic achievement is influenced by the individual's concept of his academic ability as well as the expectations and evaluations of significant others.[1] The "Pygmalion" theory or the "self-fulfilling prophesy" tends to figure significantly in evaluating the academic behavior of adolescents according to Rosenthal and Jacobson. They argued that teacher expectations and aspirations had dramatic and significant influences on students' academic achievement. Rosenthal and Jacobson concluded that students will produce in accordance with their teachers' expectations.[2]

For this study, the Basic Skills Assessment Program was utilized to determine the academic achievement and the How I See Myself Scale was used to measure the level of self-concept of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools. According to the findings of this study, there was no statistically significant difference between the self-concept and academic achievement of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools. There was, however, a remarkable consistency between self-concept and academic achievement. Students

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[1]S. Coopersmith, The Antecedents of Self-Esteem, p. 216.

[2]R. Rosenthal and L. Jacobson, Pymalion in the Classroom: Teacher Expectations and Pupils Intellectual Ability, p. 142.

who excelled academically held high self-concepts; while low achieving students, maintained low self-concepts.

Hypothesis two tested the difference between the academic performance of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools. The students' first semester grade-point-averages, on a four-point scale, were used. The research of Ronald Doll let to the conclusion that anxiety plays a key role in the academic performance of adolescents.[1]

Rapid technological and social changes subject all persons to stressful situations. Young people are vulnerable to stressful conditions related to social issues which include integration, divorce, crime, substance abuse, child abuse, and other problems which impact on adolescent behavior.

Mandler and Sarason concluded that anxiety can serve as a deterrent to the cognitive as well as the emotional development of an individual. They argue that anxiety which manifests itself during test-taking situations can impact significantly on the performance of the student.

Alternative schools have been reported to make significant changes in the academic performances of adolescents. In these schools, students are permitted to work at their own pace in a relaxed learning environment. Alternative schools provide a learning situation which reflects the needs and learning styles

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[1]Doll, op. cit., p. 23.

of young people. The instruction is individualized and personalized and students are encouraged to evaluate their decisions and make responsible choices that will contribute to their educational attainment.

The findings of this study, however, revealed no statistically significant differences between the academic performances of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

Hypothesis three tested the differences between the attendance of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools. According to an investigation of school attendance by Odell, there is a statistically significant relationship between school attendance and academic performance.[1] In like manner, Ziegler also found a close correlation between attendance and academic achievement. According to Ziegler's study, language and mathematics are significantly influenced by a number of factors: (1) social forces, (2) home and community relations, and (3) the appeal of school programs, peer pressures and teachers.[2] In contrast, the findings of this study revealed no statistically significant differences between the attendance patterns of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools. The study

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[1]Charles W. Odell as cited by Carl Ziegler, School Attendance as A Factor in School Progress, (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1928), p. 15.

[2]Plante, cited by Levanto, "High School Absenteeism," p. 100.

did reveal, however, several close relationships between school attendance and achievement in English and mathematics as found in the studies referred to above.

Hypothesis four tested the difference between alternative and traditional school students in the area of career maturity. Career maturity comprises several aspects of career development; knowing about yourself, knowing about jobs, and choosing a job. These components place emphasis on the affective as well as the cognitive domains. The affective domain relates to feelings and the personal dispositions that the individual holds towards becoming a part of the work world; while the cognitive domain focuses on the evaluations of the students' strengths, weaknesses, and knowledge of the world of work.

Herr and Enderlein reported a significant correlation between high school curricula and career maturity. According to their findings, students enrolled in academic programs tended to have more occupational awareness than students enrolled in vocational education programs.[1] A follow-up study of these same students corroborated their original findings. Again, the research suggested that students who completed a vocational curriculum in high school did not exhibit as much career maturity as did students enrolled in academic programs.

The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics,

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[1]E. A. Herr et al., Research on the Effects of Secondary School Curricula and Personal Characteristics Upon Post Secondary Educational and Occupational Patterns, N. I. E. puyblication no 80-0027 (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 1981).

reported high rates of unemployment among young Blacks between sixteen and nineteen years of age.[1] Based on the literature, students enrolled in alternative schools receive adequate career preparation. The curricula combine basic skills, career awareness and vocational opportunities which make the curricula meaningful to students.

Summary

Although no concensus exists regarding the effectiveness of alternative schools, the literature suggests that alternative schools provide a comprehensive range of educational options for growing numbers of young people who otherwise would be deprived of educatinal opportunities. Proponents of alternative education see it as a vehicle for "saving" an otherwise faltering system of education which is unable to meet the needs of growing numbers of frustrated young people who drop out of traditional schools deficient in the basic skills.

Opponents of alternative schools, on the other hand, argue that alternative schools place too much emphasis on the affective domain to the relative exclusion of the cognitive development of the student. There is research to suggest that alternative schools are enclaves for misfits who pose threats to the safety and well-being of themselves and society, and do not fit in tra-

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[1]Ibid. p. 21.

ditional school environments.

Hypothesis five was concerned with the disruptive behavior of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools. Behavior patterns were analyzed in relationship to parenting patterns and the school environment. According to Mussen, Conger and Kagan, the forms of aggression exhibited by a child depend on a number of factors: (1) the intensity of his hostile motivation, (2) the degree of environmental frustration to which he is subjected, (3) the reinforcement received for aggressive behavior, (4) his observation and imitation of aggressive models, and (5) the amount of anxiety and guilt associated with the expression of aggression.[1] A review of the literature suggested that age, sex and intelligence were among the personal attributes which determined the individual's social behaviors.[2]

Kakanen's report of alternative schools revealed that students enrolled in these schools exhibited a decrease in school violations and an improvement in their attitudes toward their fellow students and the school.[3] He also credited positive changes in the attitudes of the teachers to the success of alternative school programs.

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[1]Munsen, Conger, and Kagan, Child Devlopment and Personality, p. 371.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Lauir John hakanen, "The Stried Program, An Answer to Absenteeism," Phi Delta Kappa 59 (January, 1978): 348-349.

The findings of this study refute the point made in the literature with reference to age. Although, students enrolled in the alternative school tended to be chronologically older, their coping skills and problem-solving behaviors did not differ significantly from their younger counterparts enrolled in the traditional school. Thus, it was concluded that no statistically significant difference existed between the behavior patterns of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

The data collected for this study revealed no statistically significant differences in the career development of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

Chapter V

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, and RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was two-fold: (1) to analyze the personal characteristics of high school students enrolled in an alternative school with those enrolled in a traditional school, and (2) to compare the achievement observed in selected psychological and educational factors by these students during a semester.

The following null hypotheses were tested in carrying out this study:

$1H_o$: There will be no statistically significant difference between the mean levels of the self-concept and the academic achievement of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

$2H_o$: There will be no statistically significant difference between the mean levels of academic performance of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

$3H_o$: There will be no statistically significant difference between the mean levels of attendance patterns of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

$4H_o$: There will be no statistically significant difference between the mean levels of career maturity of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

$5H_o$: There will be no statistically significant difference between the mean levels of disruptive behavior of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools.

Research Design

The ex post facto research design was used in this study because it allowed the investigator to examine attributes which had been previously determined by the natural order of events. The independent variable was the educational experiences of the participants and the dependent variables were academic achievement, academic performance, attendance, career maturity and disruptive behavior.

Participants

The participants were seventy (70) ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools. The seventy students were randomly selected and equally divided between the alternative and traditional schools respectively.

Instruments

Data for this study was collected from the following sources: (1) Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP), (2) Career Maturity Inventory (CMI), and (3) How I see Myself. School records provided the data for academic performance, attendance and disruptive behavior.

Definition of Terms

1. Alternative School: An educational approach which is student-centered as wellas subject-centered and designed to provide basic education and survival skills for potential dropouts.

2. Compare: An analysis of the differences and similarities that exist between psychological and educational variables.

3. High School Student: Ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade students who have accumulated the number of units required for their respective grade level placement.

4. Traditional School: An educational approach which is designed to meet the educational needs of school-age individuals.

Educational Characteristics

5. Academic Achievement: The participants' reading, writing and mathematics scores on the Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP).

6. Academic Performance: The participants' first semester grade-point average on a four-point scale.

7. Attendance: The number of days present for the first semester according to the 1985-86 attendance record.

8. Truancy: The number of days absent from school without parental consent or knowledge.

Psychological Characteristics

9. Career Maturity: The participants'scores on the Career Maturity Inventory (CMI).

10. Disruptive School Behavior: The number and kind of disciplinary referrals made to the administrator's office.

Summary of Related Literature

The researcher reviewed literature related to adolescents under the following headings: (1) Characteristics of adolescents, (2) Self-concept and academic achievement, (3) Anxiety and academic performance, (4) Attendance, (5) Career maturity, (6) Parenting and disruptive school behavior, (7) Characteristics of the dropout, and (8) Evaluation of alternative education programs.

The section on academic performance indicated that anxiety ranked high on its impact on the academic performance of young adults. Today's highly accelerated, technological and competitive society subjects all persons to stress producing situations.

There is evidence to support the concept that one's cognitive appraisal of life events determine human behavior. In addition, the way a person chooses to handle anxiety depends on the types of anxiety as well as the circumstances. Research revealed that in test-taking situations anxiety can improve as well as depress test scores. Many students were found to perform well under stress; while others perform poorly.

The discussion on attendance focused on the attendance patterns of potential dropouts. Research reported high dropout rates among students with poor atendance patterns. There was also a high correlation between attendance and academic performance. As the attendance levels of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools improved, so did their levels of academic performance.

The fourth section discussed career maturity. Career maturity was found to involve several aspects of vocational development which placed equal emphasis on both the cognitive and affective domains. Many factors were found to have significant influences on the career maturity of young people. They included such variables as (1) curricula, (2) cultural factors, (3) self-concept, (4) parental influences and the interrelationship among them as they interfaced and combined to impact on the career behavior of young adults.

Hypothesis five tested the difference between the disruptive behavior of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools. Department cards were used to determine the number and kind of referrals made to the administrators' offices. A review of the literature provided widespread evidence for the contention that parental attitudes and behaviors significantly influenced the social behavior of their offspring.

According to findings by Vogel and Lauterbach, the kinds of disciplinary measures employed by parents have a long range effect on the social adjustment of children.[1] Ausubel suggested that parents employ equal amounts of (1) protectiveness, (2) dominance, and (3) appreciation in order to maintain balance in their childrearing practices.[2] The last section reviewed in the literature focused on the identifying characteristics of poten-

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[1]Vogel and Lauterbach, op., cit.

[2]Ausubel, Ibid.

tial dropouts. Although there was no single typecasting of all dropouts, there emerged a commonality of attributes among students who prematurely withdraw from school. Several common identifying characteristics include : (1) poor school attendance, (2) membership in single parent families with excessive numbers of children, (3) low educational attainment of parent, (4) over-age for their grade levels, (5) poor foundations in basic skill subjects, and (6) a lack of a clear realization of the world of work. Since potential dropouts failed to attain substantial academic success, they opted to drop out of school.

CONCLUSIONS

The following general conclusions were drawn from the findings of this study:

1. Since there is no statistically significant difference between the academic achievement of students enrolled in alternative and traditional schools it may be concluded that these students have similar self-concepts.

2. The nature of student academic achievement in alternative schools parallel academic achievement of students enrolled in traditional schools.

3, There is a strong similarity between the academic performance of students enrolled in alternative schools and the academic performance of students in traditional schools.

4. Students in alternative schools attend school about the same rate as students in traditional schools.

5. Students in alternative schools experience the same level of career maturity as students in traditional schools.

6. Students in alternative schools experience the same level of disruptive behavior as students enrolled in traditional schools.

IMPLICATIONS

The foregoing conclusions suggest the following implications.

1. Alternative schools afford appropriate attention to nuturing the self-concepts of their students.

2. The academic programs at alternative schools provide students with the skills and knowledge that enable them to be competitive on tests of academic achievement.

3, The instructional programs at alternative school encourage students to attend.

4. Students who attend alternative schools have had experiences which enable them to reach a certain level of career maturity. This level of career maturity may have encouraged students to attend alternative schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing implications, the following recommendations are made:

1. An attempt should be made to more closely match student characteristics with alternative school characteristics.

2. Present alternative schools enhance their academic programs to ensure continued student achievement and performance.

3. Since disruptive behavior is related to academic performance attempts should be made to reduce disruptive behavior in order to promote academic performance.

4. A follow-up study of the participants should be conducted to determine if they continue their education beyond high school.

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